

INFORMATION
 rubbish
 9.4.74
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June 2.

Sir,—I have seldom seen such a volume of hysterical, one-sided, ill-informed rubbish as that which has been printed in the Herald on the subject of Elspeth King and the People's Palace.

The truth of the matter is surely this. Miss King has been in charge of the People's Palace, with the position of depute keeper, for about the past 15 years or so. During this time she has done a good job — indeed she has done a very good job — in building up and displaying the collection of Old Glasgow material and the story of its people.

It is also true to say that her work may have been underfunded, along with that of many public sector enterprises. Although, as I understand it, a very great deal of money, amounting to a seven-figure sum, has been spent on the People's Palace.

This expenditure may not have been of the showy kind, but it has covered essential and important work on the eradication of rot, roof repairs, stone-cleaning, emergency exits, new toilets, new tea bar, some rewiring, and so forth. The icing on the cake will doubtless follow.

The city, in its wisdom, decided to appoint someone to a new post of keeper of social history, a position which will, to coin a phrase, be a new supremo over the People's Palace along with a number of other museums and activities.

This is not Miss King's job. She is in charge of the People's Palace, along with Provand's Lordship, and this she will doubtless continue to do, and to do well. The only difference will be in that she will be answerable to the new post-holder and not to her present boss, who is the keeper of archaeology, etc.

It is very understandable that Miss King and her many friends are disappointed that someone else got the new job. However, as this letter writer knows only too well, for every successful candidate there are bound to be several who are disappointed.

A. S. E. Browning,
 (Former Depute Director, Museums and Art Galleries),
 11b Hughenden Court,
 Hughenden Road,
 Glasgow.

People's Palace

June 5.

Sir,—Seldom have I seen such rubbish as the Herald has contained on the appointment of a keeper of social history in Glasgow's art galleries and museums department. Your editorial (May 28) refers to the curator of the People's Palace being "obliged to apply for her own post", when in fact it is a new post and does not replace the post of curator of the People's Palace. The new post means greater emphasis being placed on social history than hitherto in Glasgow's museums as a whole.

John Weyers says (May 29) that "the establishment has never liked Glasgow Green". Who are the establishment to whom he refers? Certainly not the present departmental committee. My wife and I are former Glasgow city councillors, both of us having at one time or another served on the departmental committee. We have always had an affection for the People's Palace and there was certainly no antipathy to this splendid museum by the departmental committee or any other committee.

John Weyers writes about a "shoe-string budget" for the People's Palace. The 1980s has seen inadequate funding for museums and other services all over the country due to Government policy on restricting public expenditure and cutting back severely on grants to local authorities.

It is to the credit of the city council that it has been able to find hundreds of thousands of pounds to reinstate the Winter Gardens attached to the People's Palace — not exactly within the term of a shoe-string budget.

John Weyers does not assist the present curator when he writes "that without Elspeth King's single-minded efforts the People's Palace and its Winter Gardens would not now exist". Not for a moment has closure ever been contemplated. Such a suggestion is too absurd for words.

I am sure Ms King is not unaware of the reasons why she was not appointed to the promoted post. Ken Smith writes (May 28): "She has been told in the past to secure clearance from above before speaking to the press". Such an instruction is not given without good reason.

The Friends of the People's Palace have not exactly endeared themselves to the administration by pursuing a campaign which included advocating a higher grading for the curator, a matter which should have been left to the normal process of negotiation between the council and Nalco.

I have no doubt that Ms King was very well qualified for the new post by virtue of her professional qualifications and her record of service, but there were other applicants who no doubt had the requisite qualifications and experience.

What is needed is a new or extended home for the People's Palace. The existing building is inadequate for its purpose and the internal stairs are not exactly suitable for those less than agile. With Government restrictions on capital expenditure it is not likely that a new building can be provided in the foreseeable future. However, it might be useful considering adapting and extending the existing building to meet future development if and when funding can be

Bill Hattan,
 Tanera,
 Strachur.

... just quotation from our editorial of June 28 is: "It is hard to explain why she has been obliged to apply for her own post and in the event been turned down; and even if you accept the technicality that this is a new post it is no discredit to the excellently qualified Mark O'Neill to say that there could be a better candidate for the position of the city keeper of social history than Elspeth King herself." Our editorial of June 11, propose the compromise that she should be promoted to keeper while remaining at the People's Palace. — Editor.

Appointment up to the panel

June 14.

Sir,—I am not quite sure what you are trying to prove by adding a footnote to my letter published in the Herald on June 13. It certainly does not disprove my point that the post of Keeper of Social History does not replace the post of Curator of the People's Palace.

It is not a technicality as your footnote suggests. Ms King will continue to occupy her present post, but instead of being responsible to the Keeper of Archaeology it will be the holder of the new post to whom she reports.

Surely the appointment is a matter for the professional judgment of the panel who made the appointment?

In local Government new posts are not generally filled by automatic promotion. A short list is drawn up, followed by interviews, which are not carried out by committees but by permanent officers. Only in the case of directorate appointments are committee convenors or committee members involved.

It goes without saying that the interviewing panel is concerned with a very wide field of consideration in making its choice, including professional qualifications, relevant experience, management skills, personal adaptability, and so on.

The Museums and Art Galleries Department is a happy one with cordial staff relationships, and I am sure their interviewing panels do their genuine best to be fair, consistent with the needs of the Department.

It is difficult to understand why so much criticism of the appointment when only the panel had all the personal details of the applicants and had the opportunity of interviewing a short list.

Your suggested compromise of promoting Ms King to keeper while remaining at the People's Palace does not take account of the fact that the new post is aimed at bringing art to local communities, particularly to outlying areas of Glasgow by promoting local museums, including the possibility of having touring caravan exhibitions.

In any case, Mr O'Neill has been appointed, and even if your suggestion were feasible it is unthinkable that his appointment can be reversed. Mr O'Neill should now be left to get on with his work as keeper, and Ms King as curator of the P.P.

Bill Hattan,
 Tanera,
 Strachur,
 Argyll.

June 4.

Sir,— Councillor Charles Davison is to be congratulated: by his own declared standards of perception of public concern, his post-holiday pontifications have doubled support for Elspeth King in only a week.

Herald readers should now increase the pressure by writing to district council leader Pat Lally, to Julian Spalding, and to Charles Davison himself. It is also time that the many Labour councillors who share a sense of outrage over the treatment of Ms King and the People's Palace were called upon to stand up in public and say so.

Julian Spalding is quoted as saying of Ms King: "It's quite appalling what's been said. Her sex is completely immaterial." Perhaps Mr Spalding would inform us whether it was not he himself who commented when announcing that Ms King would have to apply for her own job: "There are no jobs for the girls." Having thus publicly pre-judged the outcome of an appointment over which he presided, Mr Spalding seems excessively anxious to wash his hands of the stain.

Secondly, will Mr Spalding publicly withdraw his present veto over Elspeth King's right to comment on her own case? The fact that he can indulge in self-justification while maintaining a gag on the subject of his statements and actions is the reason why many others must speak out for Ms King. Perhaps this may yet penetrate the lamentably limited comprehension of your correspondents, John Elder and Pauline McQuade (June 4).

Thirdly, can Mr Spalding state unequivocally that he was unaware of the fact that throughout this episode the eventual appointment of Mark O'Neill was the talk of the City Chambers and of his own department? For the sake of his own integrity I hope that he can. If so, however, one would then have to ask the director of museums and art galleries on which planet he was resident during the period in question.

Mr Spalding's remarkable lack of reticence on this issue to date should guarantee us a full and frank response.

*Stewart MacLennan,
64 Terregles Avenue,
Pollokshields, Glasgow.*

June 4.

Sir,— The controversy over Elspeth King raises important issues of wider significance to the interpretation of our national past. Social history is a relatively modern discipline which attempts to examine the totality of human experience. The paucity of sources describing the times of working people has created an imbalance which related disciplines such as anthropology, archaeology, and the oral and cultural traditions are attempting to redress.

History represents a society's collective memory; when this is hijacked by one particular interest group (as happened in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era) it has serious consequences for present and future generations.

Through her work at the People's Palace, Elspeth King has succeeded in restoring the rightful ownership of that memory and its artefacts to the public domain, i.e., to the descendants of those who created it. Its truths are safe in her professional custody. Any attempt to edit that memory selectively for short-term aims is a serious issue for our community and places us on a slippery slope which can lead to complacency, falsehood, and distortion.

(Mrs) Anni Midwood,
Mhor,
Portencross Road,
Seamill.

Elspeth King's supporters

June 6.

Sir,—We, the following writers, poets, dramatists and lyricists, wish to make public our support for Elspeth King, curator of the People's Palace. We protest at what is happening to her.

When she took over her post some 16 years ago she transformed what was virtually a semi-derelict building into one of the more famous social history museums in Europe. She has achieved this with a tiny team of workers on a budget many small towns — let alone "European Capitals of Culture" — would regard as farcical. Yet we are aware that the work she does may not be popular with certain city officials and those others who would prefer "to sell" a more sanitised and sentimentalised version of history, as provided by "enterprises" of the nature of "Glasgow's Glasgow."

The shabby treatment being meted out to Ms King is symptomatic of what is really going on in the city at the present time. The history of a city does not exist to be "sold": nor does its future.

We protest at the treatment of Elspeth King.

Freddie Anderson, John L. Broom, Chris Boyce, Robert Calder, John Taylor Caldwell, Alex Cathcart, Robert Christie, Stewart Conn, Billy Connolly, Margaret Cook, Toni Davidson, Janice Galloway, Alasdair Gray, Marcella Evaristi, Jim Ferguson, Graham Fulton, George Gunn, Hamish Henderson, Joy Hendry, Archie Hind, Sandy Hobbs, Phillip Hobsbaum, John Hubbard, Pat Kane, James Kelman, Ann Kerr, Peter Kravitz, T. S. Law, Tom Leonard, Eddie Linden, Liz Lochhead, Duncan Lunan, Robert Lynn, Christine McCammond, Peter McDougall, John McGarrigle, Jeanette McGinn, Ian McKechnie, Farquar McLay, Bernard McLaverty, Brendan McLoughlin, Aonghas Macneacail, Phil McPhee, John Manson, Spike Milligan, Catriona Montgomery, Edwin Morgan, Gordon Muir, William Neil, Anne Mullen, Agnes Owens, Tessa Ransford, J. N. Reilly, Raymond Ross, Donald Saunders, Tom Scott, Janette Shepherd, Ronnie Smith, Alan Spence, Bill Sutherland, Alan Tall, Jeff Torrington, Jack Withers, James D. Young.

(c/o 244 West Princes Street, Glasgow).

Slandorous name-calling

June 9.

Sir,— It is with great dismay that I read in the Herald (June 9) that those of us who are vigorously campaigning for justice for Elspeth King in respect of the post of Keeper of Social History are being designated as "crypto-communists". I understand that, in the corridors of the City Chambers, those who attended the magnificent protest meeting were being branded a "bunch of anarchists".

When our opponents have to resort to slanderous name-calling, it conclusively confirms our suspicions that they have no reasonable arguments to present in defence of their position.

No one person can know the political stance of every one of the 200 people who attended the meeting, but it was obvious that the majority were concerned citizens having membership of no political organisation. Of those with a political affiliation, it was clear that the largest number were members of the Labour Party.

I am sure that in the audience there were a few who sincerely hold a political viewpoint akin to that mentioned by our detractors, but to suggest that these honest supporters manipulate the campaign is an absurdity. In any case, the campaign is solely concerned (contrary to allegations made elsewhere in your article) with achieving justice for Elspeth King, and all those who subscribe to that aim — whether communists, liberals, or Tories — are welcome to join in. That is the sort of broad-based campaign that gets results and there are many fine precedents in the history of the city for this type of action.

In this commendable tradition of open-mindedness and unity of purpose, those holding minority political philosophies have consistently been considered legitimate contributors. They have invariably acknowledged their minority status and they have been accepted and respected by the majority who do not share their views. To infer that such minority involvement constitutes capturing the campaign is nothing less than a despicable and malicious smear.

No doubt an additional purpose of our opponents is to represent supporters of the campaign as being located on the periphery of the city's political life. Unfortunately for them, that is not the case.

Not only are many of the participants well-respected activists in the mainstream of the Labour movement, but also committed are hundreds of ordinary people, of every social class and voting preference, who would not normally involve themselves in public protest but have been so outraged by the treatment of Elspeth King that they have felt obliged to lend their voices and presence to the campaign.

To suggest that such honest and sincere citizens are being duped by some sinister force is to insult their integrity.

Let no-one be deterred from joining in this honourable and essential campaign on account of these slanders emanating from our opponents.

Jim Mackenzie,
Strathclyde Regional Councillor.



Jack
McLean

WHAT a roll-call of dishonour it was. Billy Connolly was on it, and so was Alasdair Gray. Marcella Evaristi, Alan Spence, Peter McDougall of course. Surprisingly, so was Hamish Henderson and even more surprisingly our own Archie Hind. This wasn't just surprising to Archie; it was astonishing. Mr Hind had been far away on holiday when he was supposed to be appending his mark to the letter. The ubiquitous Pat Kane, a one-time pop singer, I am told, who is now the conscience of Culture City, was also an appendage — have I got that right? A lot more names representing the West End of Glasgow and the adherents of that ethnic minority signed the recent letter to this blatt. The letter was about Miss Elspeth King. I am in danger of becoming less than sympathetic to the curator of the People's Palace. Well, look at the company she keeps.

That is doubtless a little unfair to the lady. It is not unfair to the collection of concerned culture-vultures who have been exercising their outrage at the decision to appoint some Irish chap over the head of the redoubtable Elspeth. What a crew. I am only surprised that they didn't ask Liz Lochhead. Oh, dear God, I've just checked: she's a signatory too. They didn't ask me for my monicker: I wonder why? Had they done so, I would have sent the chaps away with a flea in their shell-like.

In fact, some toper in Heraghty's *did* invite me to sign a spurious petition in defence of Elspeth King and the World Proletariat but I dismissed his impertinence with an imperious wave of my silver-handled walking cane.

Do you know, the fellow then muttered something like, "Do you call yourself a socialist?" I found this a most peculiar observation, if observation it was. Firstly because I don't call myself anything other than a sceptic — I should have thought scepticism a sensible approach to the modern notion of socialism — and secondly because I cannot for the life of me see what the business of Elspeth King not getting a wee promotion has to do with any "ism" at all unless it is careerism. But upon reflection, I perceived the relationship. Oh yes, indeed.

Behind the campaign over this storm in a teacup are a number of organisations. The Trotskyists are there. A gang calling themselves "Workers' City" are heavily involved. They are led by several self-proclaimed Anarchists, most of whom I know and rather like, but to whom scepticism is an inadequate response. Most of the remaining supporters of Miss King are mere dupes for the above bod-

They all live in splendid big flats in the West End and Merchant City and bore each other in The Halt Bar of a Friday night. They wouldn't know working-class culture if it jumped up and skelped them with a ginger beer bottle and to hell with the threepence back.

Let us consider a true celebration of working-class culture as envisaged by this workerist bourgeoisie. Immediately upon entering the very portals of the People's Palace, you will be head-butted by a wee man with rickets. This will be followed by an embrace from a woman of clearly dubious virtue who smells of Eldorado wine and mice droppings. Her swaying companion will lift your wallet. On making your getaway, you will be verbally assaulted with cries of: "Who dae youse (astericking) think youse ur?"

A quick swannee round a collection of mildewed rags with frint embroideries of James Connolly and legends such as "The workers united will always be defeated" and you are at the exit of the building. The farewell will consist of the head-butting wee man with rickets vomiting over you. There, that'll dae you for the working-class culture.

What, in short, you are being asked to celebrate in this so-called working-class culture is but an especially ghastly variant of the Wee Black Sannyism I have been warning you lot to watch out for over many a year. It is Molly Weir with gobs on. It is all about the sheer vibrancy of the lower orders seen on the telly and not from the verandah of a high-rise flat in Castle-milk. It is book-learned proletarianism. Indeed, it is a celebration of the lumpen elements. It has damn-all to do with socialism.

It has certainly very little to do with whether or not Miss King should have got the promoted position and even less to do with whether we should be employing all these other curators at fancy wages in the first place. Nothing whatsoever to do with the fact that Scotland — Britain — is awash with carpetbagging art historians carving out empires for themselves. Working-class culture, middle-class culture, any kind of culture, is, when paraded in public as has happened over this brouhaha in Glasgow, mainly concerned with money either for the toffs or the lack of it for aggrieved pseudo-intellectuals who didn't like their mums and dads and have decided to spray their Oedipal frustrations on to society at large.

As for the working classes? Don't you worry. They couldn't give a kurdy over the entire sheebang and are generally bemused by the sound and fury of the affair. They know one thing though. It'll be them who will be paying in the end.

Yes, guilt belongs to Glasgow

The Elspeth King
affair has exposed
a cultural and
political malaise in
the city of culture,
says Joseph Farrell

NOW that passions are cooling in the Elspeth King furore, and various individuals are showing signs of embarrassment over their roles, perhaps some other aspects can be aired. From the very start, there was a certain piquancy over the fact that leaflets in support of Elspeth King were being distributed at the entrance to Glasgow Green during the festivities known as the Big Day.

The Big Day itself was one of a series of events designed to counter the charge that the Year of Culture would provide fare only for those whose idea of culture was restricted to Pavarotti and Picasso, and that its target audience was to be those who savour vintage Chablis and breakfast on croissants. Such a notion was never particularly plausible in a place like Glasgow, but it had gained currency. The leafleteers were implying that if popular culture cannot be eliminated from the city's present, there was a none too subtle ploy afoot to write it out of Glasgow's past.

Glasgow is troubled by a fear of an elaborate conspiracy to undermine its traditional view of itself, and it is this assault on its psyche which provides the only context in which the present brouhaha over the appointment of the new keeper of social history becomes comprehensible.

By any standard of cold rationality, the discrepancy between the ferocity of the emotions expressed and the banality of the issues involved is startling.

For many people the news that the post is a new one will come as a surprise, for facts have been in short supply in the whole affair. For the record, there used to be in the Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, a department of Anthropology, Archaeology and Local History, which the new



The Dear Green Place? Princes Square, typical of the new direction

director Julian Spalding has decided to divide into two new departments — Archaeology and Anthropology on the one hand and Social History on the other.

Elspeth King was assistant keeper in the old department, applied for the position of keeper in the new department of social history (along with four other applicants), was unsuccessful in her application and retains the position she previously occupied. Mark O'Neill, curator in Springburn Museum got the job. That's the story.

Both have been employed in essentially the same field, and both have performed with distinction. Elspeth King has won international renown, and must attract credit for striving to win backing for the arts or museums sector at a time when official Glasgow was infinitely more philistine than is conceivable today. Mark O'Neill established a museum in Springburn which reflected the life, work and values of a quintessentially working class Glasgow community.

The idea that he represents the *homo novus*, the sleekit yuppie — what would have become of

all these debates if that American term had not been imported? — who is corrupting the soul of old Glasgow is grotesque. He neither thinks, dresses nor, crucially, drinks like the breed of slick PR mongers now at loose around the city. He is alleged not even to own a Cellnet telephone.

If the discussion is ill-focused, its intensity and the readiness with which people from all walks of life have taken it up indicates that it has touched a raw nerve. Perhaps for all the smart talk about the first "post-industrial" city, too many people are now alienated, or perhaps the city has changed in its sense of itself too quickly. Perhaps some of the changes have amounted to no more than constructing a tiled wall no higher than eye level, behind which the old sores fester in all their familiar virulence.

It is clear that there is a bad conscience lurking in the byways of the city waiting for some issue to latch on to. Not every city has a civic conscience, but Glasgow's is in a very fragile state at the moment. The People's Palace has become the most recent of the institutions or

events to be given, willy nilly, a symbolic position as keeper of the public conscience.

There is a fear abroad that Glasgow is being taken over by alien forces, alien by virtue of class rather than of nationality, that Glasgow is being — coolly enough all the terms are particularly nasty neologisms — gentrified, yuppified, sanitised, with less of that rude earthiness which once characterised it in the golden days of John Maclean. There is a real suspicion expressed in Babbity Bowsters or the Scotia Bar that the City Chambers plan to convert the place into... what? A Florence? A Manhattan? Memories are extremely short, and it's extraordinary how rapidly that fetid slum that was Glasgow has been converted into a 'romantic', 'authentic' place.

There may be something decidedly odd about this passion spent in the service of the displays in the People's Palace something akin to the willingness of certain Whig Lords to provide noble tombstones for their viliagers rather than to pay them a living wage. *Glasgow's Glasgow* aroused the same kind of outrage, but Ravenscraig never has.

For the root of this feeling is not cultural and certainly not to do with museum life. Glasgow is conscious of being a deeply divided city, with many sections excluded from the new feasts. The centre is now a desirable place for life, but it is surrounded by glowering post-war estates, which it is a poor joke to call "communities".

If that is the real root of the bad conscience, there is something profoundly troubled about the political and moral life of a place which prefers to deal with shadows and symbols rather than confront realities, or even to talk with any seriousness about popular culture now.

It is also a profound misfortune for the individuals who from time to time have carried the burden of communal unease.

It can be predicted that there will be further eruptions of misplaced ire. The Citizens' new façade is covered in shiny, tiled brick rather than gritty stone, so before long there may be pickets in the Gorbals. Unless people discuss life and culture in the city today.

Notman 12/6/90

JULIAN SPALDING was a key figure in a museum sacking row in Manchester.

And it has been closely compared to the Elspeth King affair in Glasgow.

The city museums and art galleries boss played a prominent role in a lengthy wrangle that led to the ousting of Terry McCarthy from his post as director of the National Museum of Labour History.

Two other members of staff were also sacked from their jobs and a third resigned during a debacle that took place while Mr Spalding was director of art galleries for Manchester.

Mr Spalding has publicly denied a connection between the two cases and has played down his part in the Manchester business.

But an Evening Times investigation suggests Glasgow's new arts supremo had a very high profile in a row in which striking parallels can be drawn with the current controversy surrounding the curator of the People's Palace.

Mr Spalding headed the team which passed over Elspeth King in her application for the newly-created post of keeper of Glasgow's social history, a job which the huge groundswell of support that has since emerged for her maintains she has been doing in award-winning style for years.

The job has instead gone to Mark O'Neill, at present in charge of Springburn Museum.

The Evening Times has obtained documents and letters which indicate Julian Spalding was a leading player in the Manchester affair.

Priceless

Gwyneth Dunwoody, Labour MP for Crewe and Nantwich, who was a trustee of the National Museum of Labour History at the time of the uproar in Manchester, said today:

"The situation regarding Elspeth King would seem to almost exactly mirror the Manchester affair. History seems to be repeating itself."

LIKE ELSPETH KING . . . Terry McCarthy had spent a large part of his life - in his case 13 years - not only founding, but building up the museum's priceless collection.

MUSEUMS JOBS AND JULIAN SPALDING

£400,000 worth of damage to some of the artefacts.

That attack centred on a valuable collection of Labour party and trade union banners, which Mr O'Brien's report said were in a "poor condition" and had been transported north and stored in Salford in an "appalling manner."

We, however, have a copy of a letter to Mr O'Brien from Peter Cresswell of Stagefreight, the company who carried out the move and who are specialists in the transporting of exhibitions.

In it, he says the goods "travelled without any damage being caused." He goes on: "You made especial reference to the banners. These were clearly very old and thereby fragile. They were packed in corrugated card, quite loosely, which seemed not to affect their condition."

He points out: "None of the loads was left for any period on my vehicles, all of which were modern and clean and dry."

And he concludes: "The store at Salford was clearly very cramped. However, it appeared dry and secure and I cannot believe that any damage should have been suffered there in the short time in which it was to have been stored."

But the major issue here seems to centre on who, specifically, was responsible for the actual hiring of Mr O'Brien.

Claimed Gwyneth Dunwoody: "Gerard O'Brien was recommended to the trustees as an 'expert' on the *insistence* - and I underline the word - of Mr Spalding."

Advice

I asked Julian Spalding why he had specifically invited Mr O'Brien to carry out this investigation.

He replied: "I didn't."

I asked who had commissioned him and he replied: "It was the recommendation of the Museum and Art Galleries Commission, on the advice of . . . I can't remember now . . . the Manchester Museum's university."

But when I put this to Gerard O'Brien, he told me: "The approach came from Julian Spalding. It was obviously his job to find somebody."

Mr O'Brien, now 31 and working as education officer at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery in Preston, stands by his report.



LIKE ELSPETH KING... he is proud of his working-class background, and the artefacts he has gathered over the years reflect the history of that background.

LIKE ELSPETH KING... he is outspoken and nobody's puppet. He has been active within the Labour party, holds to the right of it, and makes no secret of the fact that he has often outraged some of those within the party branded "loony lefties."

LIKE ELSPETH KING... who has often purchased pieces for the People's Palace out of her own pocket because of inadequate funding, McCarthy, too, claims to have assisted the NMLH in this way.

But after the NMLH moved from London to Manchester in April, 1987, Terry McCarthy found himself at loggerheads with Julian Spalding.

It was the beginning of a row which is still going on to this day and which embittered and angered not only McCarthy and the rest of the museum's staff, but most of its trustees, who were at the time:

John Lloyd (chairman), national officer of the EETPU; Gwyneth Dunwoody; Michael Foot, Labour MP for Blaenau Gwent; Jack Jones, former general secretary of the TGWU; and Albert Jacob, retired Tower Hamlets, London, councillor.

Visit

In the summer of 1986, following a change in local government administration, the NMLH – then housed in London's Limehouse Town Hall – was looking for a new home.

Manchester City Council, the lead museums authority within the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, became interested in providing a new home for the large collection of Labour party artefacts.

This followed a visit to the museum's London base by Julian Spalding, then director of art galleries for Manchester.

But within days of arriving in Manchester, McCarthy and most of the trustees were shocked to learn that the promised funding for the museum – agreed during negotiations

SPECIAL REPORT

with Manchester City Council and AGMA, at which Mr Spalding had been Manchester's chief official – would not be forthcoming until certain conditions had been met.

And one of the key conditions was that Terry McCarthy step down from his post of director to allow Julian Spalding to become temporary acting director.

Mr Spalding, who had praised the museum and its staff during the negotiations to bring it to Manchester, began to question Mr McCarthy's suitability as director of the museum.

The Evening Times has a copy of a letter written on April 23, 1987, to Mr Chris Newbery of the Museums and Galleries Commission, in which Mr Spalding asks: "Is there any way that the commission can express their dissatisfaction with the administration of the museum...?"

"I need all the evidence I can get."

That same day, Mr Spalding wrote to Manchester's deputy town clerk, saying that he "would certainly not recommend Manchester City Council or AGMA to put any money into the museum under its current management."

He enclosed a report he had compiled on Terry McCarthy, and he wrote of it: "I would be grateful if you could have this checked to see whether or not it is libellous in any way."

'Negligent'

In the report, he describes Mr McCarthy as guilty of "gross incompetence and gross professional misconduct," attacks him as revealing himself in conversation "to be extremely ignorant of modern museum developments in general," describes him as "grossly negligent" and accuses him of being "high-handed, ignorant, insensitive and short-sighted."

In another report written by Mr Spalding on September 10, 1987, he

says his dealings with the museum had been "dominated by suspicion."

He wrote: "I have found it necessary at times to do things in a slightly unorthodox way, to get at the truth."

Later in the report, he describes how Terry McCarthy told him a figure of £10,000 included in the museum's budget was the advance on a book McCarthy was writing and which he intended to donate to museum funds.

"I rang this publishing firm to check this," wrote Mr Spalding.

The overwhelming feeling on the side of the museum as the bitter row grew was of incredulity. Meanwhile, the NMLH, now starved of its London local authority funding and in desperate need of cash from Manchester, slumped deeper and deeper into debt and its situation became desperate.

Today, ex-trustees chairman John Lloyd said: "The sense of disappointment that affected the majority of the trustees for a period of nearly two years, sprang from the original enthusiastic admiration for the museum as expressed by Julian Spalding.

"That was then dissipated steadily as he and others created one difficulty after another in preventing the museum opening, topping it all off by blaming the original staff of the museum, who'd done so much to create it in the first place."

This "original enthusiastic admiration" of Mr Spalding's for the museum is also documented. We have a copy of the minutes of a meeting held between the trustees and the Manchester authorities in Blackpool on September 29, 1986.

Part of the minute reads: "Julian Spalding then reported on his findings and said that after visiting the museum he was more than aware of the importance of the collection."

MALCOLM REID

"He praised the work that had already been done with such a small staff and very little funding and said that the priceless collection should be exhibited in the best possible manner..."

At the heart of the subsequent attack on the staff of the museum, though, was a report on the collection commissioned by the Manchester Authorities.

During the debacle, and through no fault of their own, the staff and trustees of the NMLH had to find temporary storage facilities for the artefacts while the cash and museum-management row continued to rage.

Qualified

This was found in the basement of Salford Town Hall, and it was here that the person called in to carry out the report, Gerard O'Brien, examined the collection.

However, his appointment at the time was, and remains to this day, a point of extreme controversy between the two sides in the argument.

Those on the museum team point to his lack of qualifications for the job, while Manchester claims he was adequately qualified.

We have a copy of O'Brien's cv at the time he was brought in to the row. It clearly states he had no work experience whatsoever in museums, and his only academic qualification in that area was a 1987 postgraduate diploma in art gallery and museum studies, gained after a course lasting only nine months.

When commissioned, he was working as a supply teacher at North Manchester High School for Girls, teaching English and general studies.

In addition, he was young, still only in his twenties. Yet his report attacked and lambasted the management of the museum and was the basis of a claim by Manchester that Terry McCarthy's style of directorship had caused about

History of Art degree, which includes a study of 19th century British social history.

"What were the alternatives of the people who were in control of the museum at the time? Were they going to stick their hands up and say: 'It's a fair cop,' or were they going to turn round and say: 'This report is a load of rubbish?'"

Mr O'Brien described how he had first met Mr Spalding. "He came along to do a talk for the museum course I was on," he explained. "I will say that I was extremely impressed by the man and I have the highest regard for him."

"It is Glasgow's great fortune that he is employed there at present."

When I raised the question of Mr O'Brien's youth and relative inexperience at the time of the report, he replied: "What do you want in life? Do you want someone with ability, or do you want someone who's been in the job for X years?"

"I think you go for ability every time. I'll take myself – anybody with ability – any time over somebody who had just been a time server. That's a general theory of life I would stick to."

Terry McCarthy claims he always knew some of the banners were in poor condition.

"We had approximately 160 banners that needed restoration," he pointed out, "but it costs between £3000 and £10,000 to restore one banner. We simply didn't have that kind of money in London."

"That's the thing that really hurts – to think that we would consciously hurt the artefacts we had so painstakingly gathered over the years."

"If we follow the O'Brien logic, what I should have done was only accept those banners that didn't need repairing, but turning things like that away amounts, in my view, to vandalism."

"So the only crime I am guilty of is picking up material which was in a bad state of repair – but we took them because, if we hadn't, they would have been destroyed."

THE MANCHESTER AFFAIR...TURN OVER

The MANCHESTER

THE National Museum of Labour History finally opened its doors in Manchester for the first time last month – more than three years after it moved there from London.

And a bitter taste remains in the mouths of all concerned in the unhappy affair.

Claimed Terry McCarthy: "I have been made a scapegoat. When your employer sends you a letter of dismissal and says to you that in their opinion you have done nothing wrong, I think they're telling me that I've been set up."

This was a reference to a letter sent to him and his colleagues by trustee chairman John Lloyd in July, 1988, giving him notice of dismissal "with the greatest of reluctance."

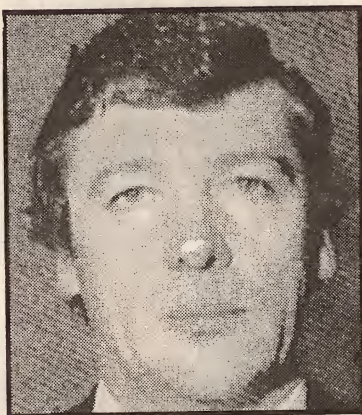
Demands

The letter concludes: "We know that you will be aware of the full story of this unhappy saga and that you know the institutions and personalities who are truly to blame for this misfortune."

Dismissal of the museum staff was the only option left to the trustees, as the NMLH plunged deeper and deeper into debt while funding from Manchester was withheld until their demands had been met.

And so McCarthy, exhibitions manager Phillip McEntee and business manager Grace Albison were sacked. Photographic officer Ricky Davis resigned.

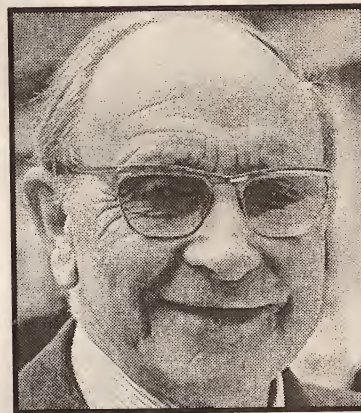
In his letter of resignation to the trustees, written in June, 1987, Mr Davis says: "The reason I am leaving is because of the attitude shown by Manchester City Council and especially Mr



GRAHAM STRINGER



GWYNETH DUNWOODY



JACK JONES



JOHN LLOYD

A bitter saga of

gest possible steps to ensure the museum's survival."

What finally sealed the fate of the museum's employees was an independent TUC inquiry into its administrative and staffing issues, a move suggested by Manchester and to which the trustees had little choice but to agree.

The inquiry concluded that Mr McCarthy and Mr McEntee were unsuited to their jobs and that Mrs Albison's post – she only joined the museum in Manchester – should not have been created and was redundant.

Opinion

However, the NMLH trustees' view

"However, since they had agreed to accept the binding arbitration of the TUC, they were forced to accept the implications of the 'report.'"

And the minutes add: "The four trustees present were still of the opinion that the museum's staff were not responsible for the museum's difficulties: if they were, the trustees would have acted long ago."

I asked Jack Jones why he had been the sole dissenter among the trustees. He said: "I make no comment on Terry McCarthy, except to say it was agreed the TUC would look into the whole business. They made a report and we

and frank with the way I talked to people.

"That did not go down very well in Manchester, who had painted for themselves a picture of a conventional director of a museum.

"And that kind of person, to put it bluntly, is not someone who has worked with their hands before – I did that before getting my degree – or is very much involved with the rank and file.

"Elspeth King would do that job until she dropped dead, and I would have done the same thing.

"This new breed of gallery director / business manager sees people like Elspeth and myself as anath-

"I will never get another job in a museum, and I'm still trying to sell my house in Manchester. Financially, this whole thing has ruined me."

Commented Gwyneth Dunwoody: "Mr Spalding's system of management is such that he unfortunately seems to think he is challenged by anyone with a deep knowledge of a museum under his control.

"Anybody who says to you the real problem was Mr McCarthy is dead wrong".

Both Terry McCarthy and Phillip McEntee are still, with the backing of their union, NUPE, seeking substantial sums in back pay, holiday pay, redun-

Julian Spalding.

"Before agreeing to move to the North West, the team at the old museum were shown correspondence from Manchester City Council and also accepted the assurances given by Mr Spalding when he visited the museum.

"It is obvious to anybody that they have now gone back on their undertakings, and have caused us all a great deal of distress and anguish."

He points out he had no job to go to and would therefore be forced to join the unemployment queue, and he concludes: "I urge you to take the stron-

or the TUC inquiry is summed up clearly in the draft minutes of a meeting they held in Michael Foot's rooms at the House of Commons on July 20, 1988.

Jack Jones, the only trustee who does not share the majority view of the other four that McCarthy and the museum got a raw deal, was absent.

But the minutes record the view of the other four. They read: "The trustees had before them the TUC 'report' on the museum's future staffing arrangements. They disagreed, by four votes to nil, with the TUC committee's conclusions.

accepted it."

Mr McCarthy, who now lives and works in Sussex as a fund-raiser for a well-known Christian organisation, said: "I am a male version of Elspeth King, and I think that Mr Spalding, with all respect to him, sees museums in a totally different way to people like myself and Elspeth.

"Like Elspeth, who is a miner's daughter, I was also brought up to speak my mind, and I worked in a kind of industrial environment where people called a spade a spade. I was very free

ma. They can't deny our academic qualifications, and so therefore they go on about us not having the right business acumen, despite the fact that I ran the NMLH for 13 years and it was *never* in the red.

Ruined

"I think Elspeth and I share what I would call virtues and what Mr Spalding sees as vices. Elspeth has put a stamp on the People's Palace, which has made it internationally known and loved, especially by the ordinary people of Glasgow.

dancy and superannuation from Manchester.

Mr McCarthy's claim is understood to be in the region of £20,000 and Mr McEntee's about £8000. Mr McCarthy is presently also seeking legal advice on the whole question.

Mrs Albison's claim, which is being handled by her solicitor, is for back pay and holiday pay.

NUPE representative David Saunders, who spoke publicly at the time of the wrangle of a "conspiracy to get rid of these people," said:

"The problem was to get rid of Terry

THE ELSPETH KING AFFAIR:



ELSPETH KING

JULIAN Spalding today denied he was trying to drive Elspeth King out of her job and away from the People's Palace.

Said Glasgow's museums and art galleries boss: "I would be extremely sad if that happened. It won't happen. In no way do I want to get rid of Elspeth King."

He insisted that the Elspeth King and Terry McCarthy affairs bore no relation to each other and added: "The only similarity is that they both happen to be areas that I have been concerned with, and both museums have been about social history."

I asked Mr Spalding if he had been surprised by the groundswell of opinion that had mushroomed in Glasgow in support of the People's Palace curator.

He replied simply: "No."

In the face of that groundswell, was there any chance of a reconsideration of the decision to appoint Mark O'Neill over Ms King?

"That groundswell of opinion isn't party to all the information," claimed Mr Spalding, "and wasn't present at

the interview, and I happen to maintain a belief in the interview process, and the decision taken there was the right one for the development of social history in Glasgow."

The museums chief also suggested that, far from there being a lowering of morale within his department since he took up his post, it had actually increased.

Deal

"You can tell good morale by the level of output," he claimed. "The amount of activity now going on in the museums is much, much higher, and that is due to the amount of work being put in by the staff.

"And I'm getting a very positive feedback. Not everyone likes every change, and I probably wouldn't be doing my job if they did."

The city's museum supremo also declared of the Manchester fiasco: "There was no witch-hunt indictment of Terry McCarthy in any way whatsoever."

And to the allegation that he may have been behind a campaign aimed at discrediting McCarthy and eventually driving him out of his job, he replied: "I deny that absolutely. It is absolutely untrue."

Mr Spalding suggested the Evening

Times was "obviously trying to make me some sort of ogre in the Elspeth King business, which is totally unrelated and a totally different circumstance."

He went on: "You obviously think you've got onto some sort of evil person you're trying to paint, and I think it's scurrilous."

I asked Mr Spalding about the allegation that he had wanted the NMLH, but not its staff.

He replied: "It's not true. I wanted the NMLH. Full stop. The NMLH wanted to come to Manchester and Manchester wanted to have the NMLH, and it was Terry McCarthy's idea to come to Manchester as the director of the museum, and the board too wanted to come.

"I was the lead officer in Manchester. I was the one who had to negotiate and propose the terms which we would have the museum, and I was able to negotiate a deal of two city centre buildings rent and rate free, £300,000 a year grant aid and £800,000 capital.

"One or two conditions were put on by Manchester for when it came, and one of them was that the museum would have to be recognised by the Labour movement as *the* national museum.

"So we had to get the recognition by the TUC and Labour Party that it would be the main depository for artefacts of the Labour movement. That was essential.

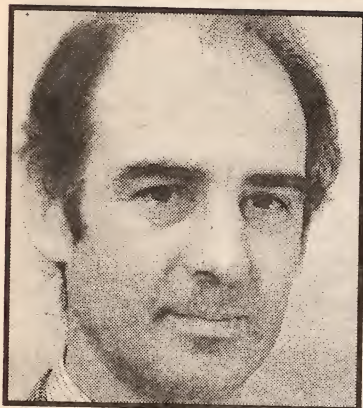
"And the other thing was that the museum would present us with an inventory of what the collection contained, which would prove the title of the museum to the exhibits.

"The inventory was never presented, which caused us considerable problems, and the ownership of the collection was never clarified."

Mr Spalding denied he had tried to discredit McCarthy. I referred him to his April, 1987 letter to Mr Chris Newbery of the Museums and Galleries Commission in London, in which he asked if the commission could express their dissatisfaction with the administration of the museum and stated: "I need all the evidence I can get."

Mr Spalding responded: "It was a way of trying to get at what was extraordinary. It was an attempt to try to understand why the museum and to try to sort of, you know . . . how can I put this? . . . to bring all the pressure I could to get the museum to present the information that was required for it to receive public funding.

ALL IAIN...



DAVID SAUNDERS



PHILLIP McENTEE

sackings

McCarthy, but in getting rid of him, they got rid of everybody else as well.

"Pressure was brought about through Spalding - because he was the main negotiator for Manchester - to discredit the way the museum was being run."

Councillor Graham Stringer is the leader of Manchester City Council and he supports Julian Spalding's view of the debacle.

"It was completely the previous director's fault," he claimed, "and two independent inquiries - the TUC one and Gerard O'Brien's report - found that the museum was being run in a haphazard, disgraceful and unprofessional way."

And he added: "There was never any doubt that Mr Spalding behaved at all times in a professional way."

Retired former Tower Hamlets councillor and NMLH trustee Albert Jacob said of Mr Spalding's contradictory views of the museum: "It shook us at the time, when he changed from one view to the other like that."

"I said the move to Manchester sounded too good to be true, when they promised us everything. Mind you, I al-

they were playing funny tactics - or someone was."

Phillip McEntee (44) was out of work for eight months after being sacked from his NMLH job. "We gave up an awful lot to move to Manchester," he said, "and then we were left high and dry."

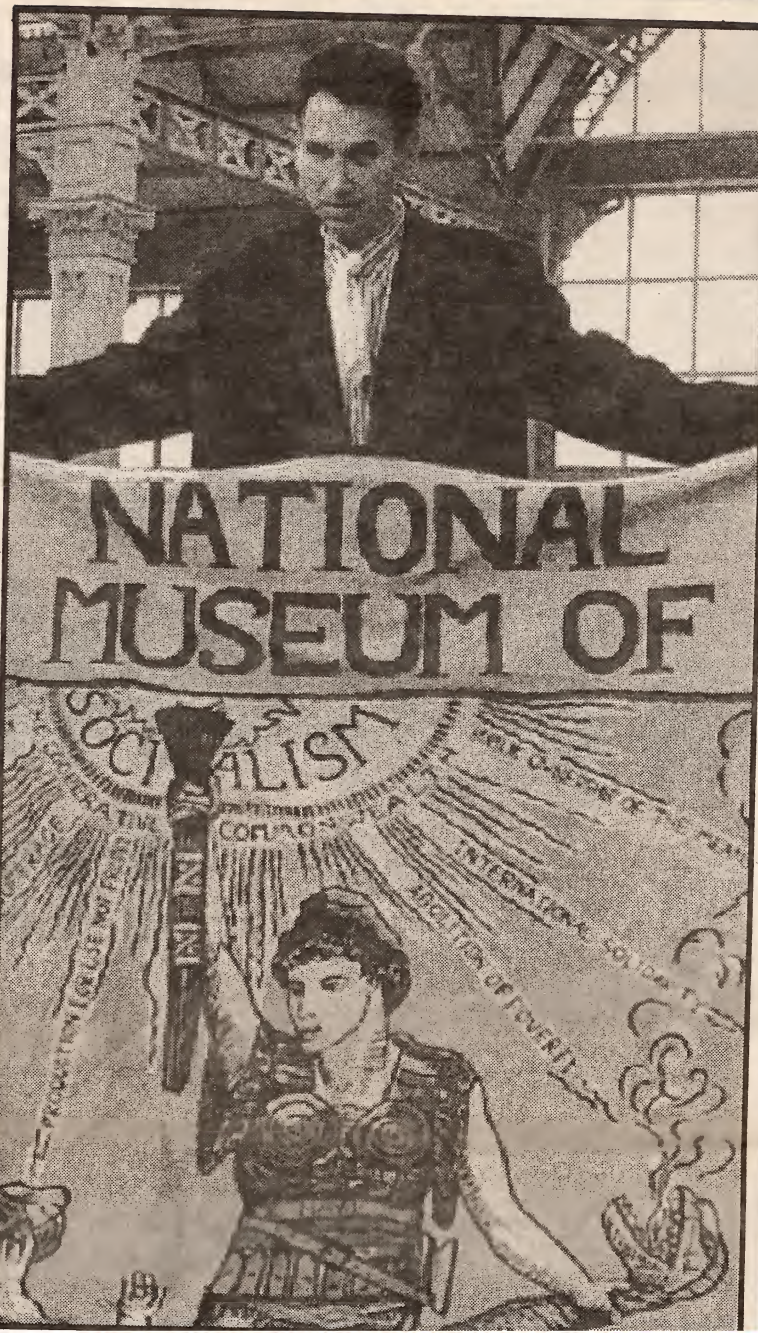
Mr McEntee has since returned south, where he now works as a postman, having failed to get another museum job.

He went on: "The deal was that there would be funding as soon as we came to Manchester. Then they said they needed to ascertain who owned the collection and make changes in the trust deed."

"That was just a tactic to stop funding the museum, so that the trustees could be forced into getting rid of us and then Manchester could put their own people in."

"Spalding's role in that, as arts officer for the lead authority, was to carry that tactic out - and he did, because we were all left out of work."

"They wanted the museum, but they didn't want the people who came with it. But if they'd said so in the beginning, we wouldn't have gone, because the



they could not stand

FORMER staff of Glasgow's Museums and Art Galleries department spoke today of the low morale they claim has afflicted some of the workforce since Julian Spalding was appointed director.

Bill Murray (57), technical assistant at Haggis Castle Museum for Children for 15 years, left his job earlier this year.

And he blames Glasgow's new museums boss for the radical step he has taken.

"I walked away from Mr Spalding," he said. "I've got a wife and two young children, but I preferred unemployment to serving the man."

"In literally half an hour, Mr Spalding came into Haggis Castle and stated the place."

"His treatment of the young, energetic staff was appalling and shocking. One young man who was a particularly good auxiliary was asked: 'Why do you stick this? Can't you find employment elsewhere?'"

Mr Murray said there had been many phone calls from Manchester museum staff warning them about their new boss.

Andrew Foxon left his job as assistant keeper of archaeology at Kelvingrove in January for a new post as keeper of archaeology for Hull Museums and Art Galleries.

He said: "Quite rapidly after his arrival, a lot of the staff became disillusioned, principally because of the managerial style and the way in which the decision-making was being done."

JULIAN SPALDING'S VIEW

"Manchester was offering it substantial funding of a type it had never had before in its history, and it was not doing anything to enable it to receive that money, and I couldn't understand it."

"It wanted to come at the same time as it wouldn't meet what were totally legitimate terms."

I put to Mr Spalding the inherent contradiction in his views of the museum and its staff, as represented by his glowing comments on it during the negotiations to bring it to Manchester and his attack on it once it had relocated.

He replied: "Certainly my view changed. I don't know where you've got these documents from, and I don't know how... I'm rather reluctant to talk about... I mean I haven't got my own files or anything like that."

"The... I wonder what I want to say here... I have to pick my words carefully..."

Mr Spalding was silent for a few moments. He then went on: "I would say that... let me think... I have to be careful what I say, because I don't want to be misleading..."

There then followed a 15-second silence, before the museums and art galleries director continued: "My first

impressions of the museum were... I certainly thought the museum was worth bringing to Manchester, and the... what can I say more, really?... and I thought that, you know, a lot had been achieved on very little funding... as I became more and more concerned about the management of the museum as I got to know more about it. I was, yes."

Complex

I put it to Mr Spalding that his contradiction seemed to indicate that he wanted the museum but not its staff, but that if he had stated that condition before the move, the trustees would not have agreed to its relocation.

He replied: "I think that's quite a wrong interpretation of it. I did want... I have to be careful what I say here too, because it was an extremely complex matter, and it became much more complex as the museum became bankrupt and the legal issues of it became so contorted that I must be very careful what I say, because... you know, I can't remember it all, but... I certainly didn't... it certainly never occurred to me that... I wanted the museum. Full stop."

"I thought it was great for Manchester to get the NMLH, its staff and everything. The whole thing. When it proved so difficult to fund it, I couldn't believe it."

"I am actually extremely pleased that the museum is now on a proper financial footing and in Manchester."

"I'm absolutely delighted, and I would regard it as one of my professional achievements to have helped establish the NMLH on a proper financial footing with a proper future. I'm proud of that."

I turned to Gerard O'Brien's report on the museum which suggested Terry McCarthy's style of management had been responsible for hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage to the collection.

I asked if it didn't strike Mr Spalding as odd that the man who had devoted 13 years of his life to building up the collection, often helping to fund it out of his own pocket, should do this?

"But why," answered Mr Spalding, "if he spent 13 years, was there no inventory of that collection? Why did we not know, and he not know, where a lot of things came from?"

Mr Spalding then went on to deny

he had been the one to hire Gerard O'Brien to write the report that had been so instrumental in driving Terry McCarthy out of his job.

Mr O'Brien later claimed that it had been Mr Spalding who had made the approach to him.

However, Mr Spalding did say that he had happily gone along with the decision to hire O'Brien.

"He was extremely well qualified," he maintained. "He did an extremely good job. I think you've not done your research very well."

Had he gone along with the Manchester decision to withhold funding? "I thought that was entirely right."

That is a straightforward legal agreement. You cannot give funding to anything. You have to give public funding on all sorts of terms."

Had he been the architect of the move to withhold funding? "No, I wasn't the architect of the move. I was working for Manchester City Council and for AGMA. It's a large organisation with a lot of money. I was following the instructions."

"The innuendos that you've been giving me are horrible. They're like some sort of hatchet job on me. They're not true. They're extremely nasty."

sions would be made and then those decisions would not be passed on.

"Morale was at a very, very low ebb when I was there, and I would attribute quite a lot of it to Mr Spalding."

Bill Montgomery took early retirement in April after failing to gain even an interview for one of two security jobs that were advertised within the department, despite 20 years' experience in city museums.

And he's convinced he knows why. He said: "I've opened my mouth a few times against management, so my face doesn't fit."

"The first priority is nothing to do with how good you are at the job - it's whether you're going to fit into Mr Spalding's cosy circle."

To Bill Murray's comments, Mr Spalding replied: "That's all lies. I would never have made remarks like that. I can't remember them. There's no point in me making remarks like that."

The museum boss replied to Mr Foxon's statements by saying: "He's just wrong. He left in the middle of a process of change which is going on now."

"In any situation of change, and there have been very successful changes, there are bound to be periods of difficulty."

To Bill Montgomery's grievance, Mr Spalding responded: "That certainly isn't the practice of the department. Everyone has a right to know why they didn't get an interview. It's part of our personnel practice."

That attack centred on a valuable collection of Labour party and trade union banners, which Mr O'Brien's report said were in a "poor condition" and had been transported north and stored in Salford in an "appalling manner."

We, however, have a copy of a letter to Mr O'Brien from Peter Cresswell of Stagefreight, the company who carried out the move and who are specialists in the transporting of exhibitions.

In it, he says the goods "travelled without any damage being caused."

He goes on: "You made especial reference to the banners. These were clearly

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

in Manchester. And it has been closely compared to the Elspeth King affair in Glasgow.

The city museums and art galleries boss played a prominent role in a lengthy wrangle that led to the ousting of Terry McCarthy from his post as director of the museums.

Fresh attack over King affair

THE wounds over the Elspeth King affair were reopened yesterday as a group demanding that she be given the post of keeper of Glasgow's social history accused the district council of "milking the budgets" of council departments to pay for culture city celebrations.

Workers' City, a campaign group set up to "right a quite specific wrong" against Ms King, broke its silence over comments and criticisms from council leader Mr Pat Lally and Mr Neil Wallace, depute director of festivals.

In a statement, the group stepped out with the boundaries of its main objective, to win Ms King the job, by criticising Glasgow's role as capital of

culture and the financial implications of that role.

Attacking the "shabby treatment" of Ms King, which has caused a split within the Labour-controlled authority, it attacked what it described as attempts to gag critics of the culture celebrations.

It also dismissed the vision and prosperity of the city spelt out by Mr Lally in a 2000-word article in last Saturday's Herald, claiming it was little more than a slaves' charter.

The group demanded answers to the financial aspects surrounding Glasgow's reign as culture city, and, in particular, its "sinking flagship", the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition.

Workers' City alleges that the

budgets of all district council departments, with the exception of housing, have been "milked" to keep the celebrations afloat until the end of the year.

Although accepting that the day of reckoning was six months away, it challenged Mr Wallace to provide interim accounts and an assessment.

Emphasising that everyone is interested in the facts, it asks: "What are they? What are the full costs of culture city and its sinking flagship, Glasgow's Glasgow?"

The future of Glasgow Green is also raised in the light of allegations that parts of it are destined for private house-building.

Mr Wallace last night declined to

comment on the matter. Mr Lally was unavailable for comment.

The King affair was raised by Norman Buchan, Labour MP for Paisley South, during a debate in the House of Commons on Thursday. He said it was a pity that Ms King had not been a keeper of social history.

He added: "Those who say that social history does not matter should be aware of the controversy that has been let loose in Glasgow. The Glasgow Herald has received more letters about the appointment of the new keeper of social history in Glasgow than about any other subject, including the

James Kelman on King.....

THURS June 23

Labour ire over King campaign

A NUMBER of Labour councillors who campaigned on behalf of People's Palace curator Elspeth King now face disciplinary proceedings for talking to the press.

Among those who may be brought before Glasgow's Labour group executive is Councillor Martin Hilland, convener of the sub-committee responsible for the People's Palace until the committee's dissolution two months ago.

Councillor Pat Lally, leader of the ruling Labour group, said: "There were reports in the press quoting members of the group which the executive want to discuss with the councillors concerned."

The first opportunity for the Elspeth King affair to be debated came yesterday at a meeting behind closed doors of the 60-member Labour group.

A 22-signature protest letter from members called on the Labour administration to review the decision. But yesterday it found a second round robin placed before the executive.

This second letter, signed by 25 councillors, expressed confidence in the leadership, and concern at the barrage of public criticism of the party arising out of the affair.

Senior councillors, including personnel convener Councillor James Mutter and arts and culture convener Councillor Charles Davison, stonewalled a steady stream of criticism from Ms King's supporters.

The two factions found themselves, in effect, voting on the merits of the two letters. The rebels failed by 31 votes to 18 in their attempt to have the decision reviewed.

The King camp, however, did not give up, and tabled yet another motion to have the People's Palace removed from under the wing of the arts and culture committee and administered separately. This move also failed.

28/6/90

LALLY'S JOB GAG SPARKS LABOUR ROW

GLASGOW Labour leader Pat Lally was slammed today over an attempt to gag his own councillors.

Two councillors who spoke out over the council's handling of the Elspeth King affair face disciplinary proceedings.

If the Labour executive decides they have broken rules about who can speak to the press they could face suspension from the group.

But Tory and Democrat councillors today condemned the Labour rules as "Stalinist and draconian."

Conservative councillor Bill Aitken said it was deplorable. "It seems Stalinist tactics are being used against those who spoke out against the Labour group leadership."

Liberal Democrat councillor Robert Brown said: "Whatever you

By FIONA MONTGOMERY

think of the issue their members are entitled to speak their view on it."

A large number of Labour councillors reacted furiously after Ms King, curator of the People's Palace, was not appointed Glasgow's keeper of social history - what many saw as her own job re-defined.

Leading writers, artists and historians have joined in a vociferous protest to overturn the appointment of Springburn Museum curator Mark O'Neill to the post.

At an angry private Labour group meeting yesterday 22 councillors called for a review.

But Councillor Lally won backing from the group and has called councillors Frank McAveety and Martin Hilland to explain to the executive why they spoke to the press. They could face a reprimand or even with-

drawal of the Labour whip if found guilty of a serious and repeated breach of group standing orders.

Mr Lally insisted today the action had nothing to do with Elspeth King, only certain members of the group were allowed to speak to the press.

These were: ● Committee conveners on matters relating to their committee, ● Local members about local ward issues, and ● Mr Lally himself on group matters.

Not all members of the Labour group are happy with the decision to ask the two councillors to come before the executive.

Some have privately expressed anger at what they say is selectivity in deciding who may or may not speak to the press.

And they point to off the record briefings given to defend the council's position as an example of the unfairness of the action taken by Mr Lally.

TINY 'TEC TAKES LOOT

A typical Glasgow rammy

THE King affair, as it quickly came to be called, shows little sign of burning itself out after more than a month. It is a typically Glaswegian controversy — impenetrable and even infuriating to many outsiders, who regard it all as a fuss about nothing. Many Glaswegians, too, are now becoming impatient to see the matter finally resolved. It has developed into something more than a simple argument about the pros and cons of the appointment made to the new post of keeper of social history. Increasingly it has been caught up in a wider debate about Glasgow's year as European City of Culture. In particular, the 1990 "Glasgow's Glasgow" exhibition is being seen by some as a symbol of sanitised and yupified culture, contrasting with the more solid virtues of the working-class culture represented by Elspeth King's People's Palace.

Well, there is a great deal of validity in the general point that Glasgow's permanent assets should not be neglected in favour of the more transient splendours of 1990. One of the real tests of 1990 will be what happens in 1991. But we may be in danger of being distracted by a false dilemma. On the one hand, the People's Palace has a broader appeal than this kind of argument acknowledges — Elspeth King herself has an international reputation. And on the other

hand, as Mr Neil Wallace, deputy festivals director, has vigorously argued, the facts don't really fit the view of 1990 as some kind of a yuppie festival. One can sympathise with Mr Pat Lally's desire to see the end of the affair (though he is surely going too far when he claims it is damaging the city's year of culture — if the programme is any good it should be able to withstand a bit of controversy). The argument is becoming tiresome and sterile, as Mr Lally implies, and it is just a pity that he himself will not take the necessary steps to resolve matters as satisfactorily as possible.

The crux of the matter remains Ms King's own position, and the key to a solution must be her promotion to a personal post of keeper. The clear impression, after some five weeks of controversy, is still that she was treated badly and placed in an impossible position. This is still the case, and it is hard to see how Councillor Lally can put the matter behind himself until the basic anomaly is removed. The controversy, although it has dragged on too long, has not been totally unproductive. Mr Lally is justified in criticising some of the pro-King lobby as excessively confrontational, but our correspondence columns have demonstrated a very broad support which is not so easily dismissed in these terms.

Ms King should be returned to controlling power within the People's P

CONTRARY to official criticism, the campaign on behalf of Elspeth King was not hijacked by the Workers' City group, it was launched by it. But the campaign quickly developed beyond that point, as the enormous range of letters to the Glasgow Herald and the 10,000 people who signed the petition will bear testimony.

The only concern of the campaign is the shabby treatment of Ms King. Its one objective is, and always has been, the righting of a quite specific wrong: Ms King should be returned to controlling power within the People's Palace, which in the present situation means that she be installed as keeper of social history.

The deputy director of the festivals unit is "absolutely incensed" by those who make a connection with this affair and the European Capital of Culture Year. In that case, let his wrath descend heavily on certain senior executives. For them, the campaign on behalf of Ms King is proving a major headache; they are "alarmed by what they see as a threat to the council's whole policy" for 1990.

Mr Wallace must also have a word with no less a personage than the leader of the district council who is now on record with his reference to the "inevitable backlash" of the affair, that it has "focused attention on the 1990 Cultural Capital of Europe". Perhaps Mr Wallace and Mr Lally "can get inside the tent" and hammer it out in private, then they can stream outwards and inform the public of the outcome.

Elspeth King's one real fault seems to lie in her "imperfect understanding of how political systems work and how they can be used as allies", in the opinion of Mr Wallace, thus she has "alienated possible powerful supporters within the political systems". No doubt the leader of the district council is such a potentially "powerful supporter".

As far as the current controversy is concerned, much of this power lies in the fact that he is allowed to speak, whereas his colleagues have been reprimanded for doing so, and then gagged publicly. Mr Lally points out that council members simply cannot "interfere" with the appointment since it is "expressly forbidden".

Many people may argue, however, that no interference was necessary in the new appointment since the person who chaired that particular committee was Julian Spalding. A certain irony underscores Mr Spalding's unfortunate comment that "there are no jobs for the girls" when it is remembered that Elspeth King was one of the contenders for the post he now holds; both were interviewed under the council's equal opportunities policy, by a 14-strong all-male committee chaired by Mr Lally.

It is common knowledge that Elspeth King and her assistant Michael Donnelly made The People's Palace their first priority rather than the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition. Mr Mark O'Neill, who is, perhaps, more aware of the need not "to alienate powerful supporters", was directly involved in preparing Glasgow's Glasgow at a time when the Springburn Public Hall was falling into disrepair and Springburn Park, in the words of one Herald correspondent, "was systematically run down, its beautiful rockeries vandalised, its tea-house demolished and its magnificent Winter Gardens left a crumbling and derelict shell."

The shabby treatment of Elspeth King has caused a split within the council. The longer it goes on, the deeper the ramifications and the wider the political implications. Already, Glasgow District Labour Party "has deplored the decision not to appoint Ms Elspeth King". It also "has had to remind (Labour) councillors that the party's policy was to oppose any private development on Glasgow Green, including Flesher's Haugh".

The continuing news of structural change and new development in places like the City Halls or Glasgow Green, or Gorbals, or along the banks of the Clyde are greeted with horror by many, not only at the prospect of change, but by the fact that such deci-



LEFT — James Kelman, and right, leaders of the Workers' City group, (back) Ian McKechnie and Ned Donaldson, (front) Hugh Savage and Farquhar McLay.



In connection with the Elspeth King affair, the writer James Kelman has submitted this article to the Glasgow Herald on behalf of the Workers' City group. It is a response to the arguments expressed by Councillor Pat Lally and by Mr Neil Wallace, deputy festivals director, of Glasgow District Council.

The Elspeth K a reply from W

sions seem to have been made already, without a proper mandate from the people who put them in power.

Perhaps this provides the key to why the campaign on behalf of Ms King has brought such widespread support while at the same time casting shadows upon other matters. It is no good ordering folk to stop thinking for themselves. Politicians and officials must recognise that Glaswegians are currently faced with a battery of issues and will continue drawing general conclusions.

Apart from a small minority, those who support the campaign do not align themselves with Workers' City. This group is few in number and usually meets once a week in the Scotia bar. It is not affiliated to any particular party, and has no particular political line; within the group generally there is a very wide range of opinion.

If there is one unifying factor amongst those involved it is simply an antipathy to the Glasgow, European Capital of Culture Year enterprise and what we see as represented by it. In this, our criticism has been consistent.

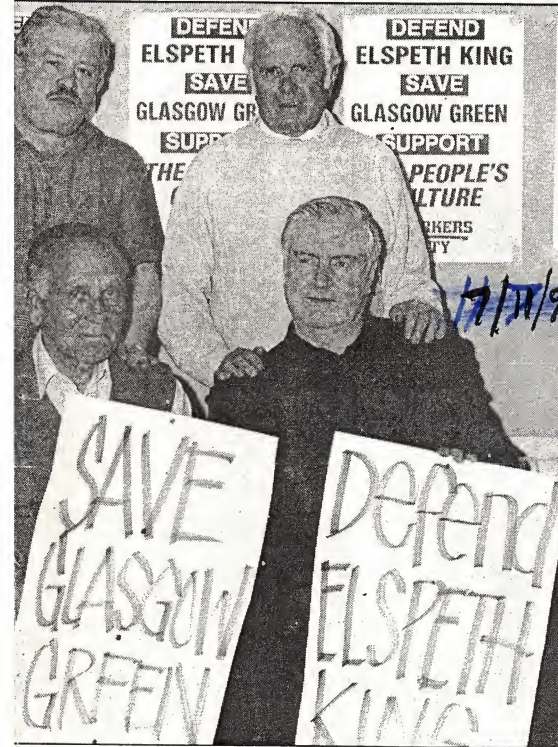
No matter the "demands" of officials, we shall continue to do so in 1990, and beyond, developing and entertainments as a Worker what is officially "going on".

People are being castigated for the Year of Culture; officials are if those who attack the enterpr city itself. Critics are treated as But however unpatriotic it may awkward questions will continue district councillors and certain the city (including Ms Elspeth freedom of speech and express the vast majority of Glaswegia

Individual critics are actually deputy director of the festivals better be prepared to prove their financial or otherwise". One of know is that whatever the Ye sends, "it is the intention" of M council and their "colleagues o

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place, which means that she be installed as keeper of social history?



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to use the title to the maximum advantage; (they) are
going to milk it for all it is worth... to open up
employment opportunities, in cultural industries and
in tourism."

Art, drama, history, music, literature and so on
have now been roped into the "cultural industry".
One of the more worrying features of the current
"1990 cultural enterprise" is what amounts to virtual
ignorance of what art really is. But any genuine art
cannot help but tell truths about the world, it cannot
help but cut through the false images and myths such
as those being portrayed via the expertise of Glasgow
District Council's 1990 marketing agency, Saatchi
and Saatchi.

What exactly is being "milked for all it's worth"?
The creative artists who produce the art? The folk
who go along to galleries, libraries, museums and
concerts? The people who sell the tickets, the hot
dogs, the sweets and ice cream? In this context, the
people of Glasgow have themselves become re-
sources of the "cultural industry", not a workforce
but a multitude of assets — just like parks and river
banks and common greens — and the problem with

assets, no matter the industry, is that in the final
analysis they are always disposable.

The future prosperity of Glasgow, according to
Mr Lally, will be "based upon service industries"
such as "leisure and tourism". Like the leader of the
district council, other folk have been to Florence.
The magnificent vistas and beautiful architecture are
certainly a joy to behold. But up and down the streets
you will be rapidly relieved of your holiday money by
a variety of merchants, franchise-holders and other
members of the "cultural workforc". People em-
ployed to "service" these industries are obliged to
work long hours for very low wages and, when the
season ends, they are the first to be laid off.

In the sort of future being envisaged post-1990, the
majority of Glaswegians seem destined to work for
little more than dole money, to serve and to entertain
tourists and others. Glasgow developed in modern
times as a workers' city, people came here to find
work. Its character continues to develop and to
change, with people from housing "schemes" being
bussed in to work for Merchant City.

It isn't only writers, artists and other pro-poverty
"dilettanti" who demand the right to be "difficult".
There will be many people in the city interested in the
"facts" of 1990. The one detail of major concern is
the final reckoning, the balance sheet at the end of it
all. But figures such as these cannot conceivably be
known until some time in the future.

There are, however, a few other facts that are
worth hearing about: one third of Glasgow Green is
being handed over to private developers, while the
latest leak suggests parts of the Green are destined
for private house-building; 60% of the work of the
city's parks' department is being put out to private
tender; hundreds of council employees' jobs have
been shed as part of the process of competitive
tendering; as much as 10% of the general services
budget, from all council departments except housing,
is estimated as having been "milked" to pay for 1990;
admission charges have now been introduced for
entry to the McLellan Galleries and Glasgow's Glas-
gow, breaking a long-established principle of free
access to the people's artistic and cultural heritage.

As far as the Glasgow's Glasgow event is con-
cerned, £157,000 has been transferred from the
Summerston waste disposal project to make up its
deficit.

Mr Wallace of the festivals unit insists that we
"prove our point with the facts, financial or other-
wise", but the real burden of proof does not lie with
us, nor with the people of Glasgow as a whole. It lies
with the festivals unit and the district council.

Everybody is interested in the facts. What are
they? What are the full costs of culture city and its
sinking flagship, Glasgow's Glasgow (now being
hailed as the Marie Celeste in certain Glasgow hos-
telries)? We are halfway through the year, it is time
for an interim account and assessment.

But in 1990, facts like these may have wider
implications. And what about the "coincidences"? In
June, following upon the shameful treatment of
Elspeth King came proposals for the Glasgow Green
development, news of the coming demolition of
Queen Elizabeth Square, structural change at the
City Halls. People are entitled to ask, "What next?"
— particularly in view of the scandal surrounding
the Lafferty Construction contracts now surfacing
across in Renfrew.

Mr Lally was elected leader of the district's La-
bour group on a platform of more open government.
Perhaps it is time to provide the people of Glasgow
with some evidence of this.

On behalf of Workers' City,

Freddie Anderson, Norman Bissell, Ronnie Boyd,
Ned Donaldson, Leslie Forster, James Kelman,
Tommy Kays, Janette McGinn, Jim McKay,
Ian McKechnie, Farquhar McLay,
Brendan McLaughlin, Hugh Savage, Jack Withers.

10

7/7/90

Les liaisons dangereuses at Lally Palais

8/7/90

THE row over Elspeth King (keeper of the People's Palace, Glasgow) and Pat Lally (keeper of the Lally Palais, also known as the City Chambers) almost boiled over into an international incident last week.

A French journalist, hot on the trail of the story that came close to splitting the Glasgow District Council Labour administration down the middle, and causing untold damage to the cultured city image, was chatting to a 1990 insider whom the Frenchman imagined to have the inside track on the spat.

The source close to the throne, in his best fractured French, indicated that he had nothing to add to the thousands of words written and shouted about *l'affaire Lally et King*.

With a Gallic glint in his eye, the French correspondent rushed off to tell the world about an *affaire de coeur* that became an *affaire d'etat*. Just before he got to the phone, though, the City Chambers wallah was able to set the record straight.

What a shame, thinks Murdoch; it would have made a great mini-series. Given the post-code of the People's Palace, *G30something* would be a great title.

John Murdoch

Edinburgh EH1 1BX
G2 2LB

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FOR FURTI
CAMERON

Linking defence group savaged by official

Continued from Page 1

ticular view of a 'new' Glasgow which 1990 is somehow supposed to represent.

"The pathetic, factless, plunk-walking, anti-1990-ism of McLay, Kelman, Savage and all the rest is an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce," he said.

None of them had the slightest idea of what was actually happening in 1990, let alone who was doing what, what it actually represented, and how the funds were being allocated.

"None of them has ever had any contact with my office or the individuals who've been working for almost three years with something like 400 active and engaged organisations in Glasgow.

"None of them has checked a single fact in re-

lation to the preposterous claim that 1990 does not represent the true Glasgow," he said.

All the "anti-1990 'yuppie-Glasgow' Lego language" had no application whatsoever.

Mr Wallace's letter ended with a warning. He said: "I will not be associated with any suggestion that her failure to secure the new post is in some way connected with our position or influence within any sphere of the district council or what we are doing for Glasgow and its organisations... If you and your colleagues are going to persist with the 'sanitised 1990 Glasgow' fantasy, you had better be prepared to prove your point with the facts, financial or otherwise. I insist that you stop linking our name with the current protest."

Mr Hugh Savage, who

confirmed that he had received a copy of the letter, declined to comment on the basis that it was a private and confidential matter. He also said that Mr Kelman and Mr McLay had both received copies.

Last night, Mr Wallace confirmed he had sent a letter but said it was clearly marked "private and confidential" and was not to be used in any public way whatsoever.

Mr Kelman said he had received the letter, adding: "I don't know whether Mr Wallace will regret it, or whether it was fully considered. There is not much to be said about it, but it is interesting that writers in Glasgow are now being considered 'an embarrassment to the cultural workforce'. It seems that people are not meant to criticise things any longer."

Do they even KNOW about Call That Singing — the community choral project involving over a thousand ordinary people who just want to sing through 1990, and beyond as well no doubt? All anybody has to do is LOOK at the 1990 programme and have the courtesy to check out what is actually happening every day in every week. And all the anti-1990 "yuppie Glasgow" Lego language has no application whatsoever. Their case is demolished. No wonder they don't bother.

I regard Elspeth King's predicament as close to a personal tragedy as you can get. So, if we are not careful, will Mark O'Neill's become. I also detest the way in which their careers are being manipulated politically. But I will not be associated with any suggestion that her failure to secure the new post is in some way connected with our position or influence within any



NEIL WALLACE: "I've simply had enough of being told that the exhaustive and dedicated work of the last few years is in the name of nothing worthwhile."

Fantasies of 1990 and King campaign

in a bid to get them to do what several other important Glasgow arts organisations have done: to use 1990 as a means to improve their base level of operation on a permanent basis (*his italics*). As far as I can tell, that manoeuvre failed, I don't know why. We were always, and have always, been standing by to help on any aspect of the People's Palace 1990 programme, and in fact the exhibitions programme

ate in a constructive manner, and an imperfect understanding of how political systems work and how they can be used as allies. And the second is the destructive confrontational style of the so-called Friends of the People's Palace who have, in my view, done more harm to the People's Palace cause within political circles than anybody could imagine. Always perpetuating the crap about GDC politicians not

None of them has checked a single fact in relation to the preposterous claim that 1990 doesn't represent the true Glasgow. There are hundreds of projects and events, and dozens of real, community-based, professional and non-professional organisations doing work which reflects the real Glasgow.

What about the aspects of life and work reflected by Glaswegians in

any text is a letter written "to whom" by Neil Wallace, deputy director of the festival, in response to a pamphlet on the affair received by him at his home. Ms King, of the People's Palace, Glasgow, was in her application for the new post of social history, which went instead to Mr McNeill. Although it is described by Mr Wallace as "strictly private and confidential", the letter concerns matters of public interest and has been widely circulated by its recipients. We have therefore published it. Parentheses in italics have been added by us.

RENTLY returned to my apartment to find the attached letterbox. It states that the work "is not popular" of culture officials because (sic) on the true Glasgow on the sanitised stories on the likes of Glasgow's... I am of... I demand... a "city of you that admirers profession team. I've speeches abroad, copy, put from hon her and (Michael Donnelly, the assistant). I have constantly on visitors' itineraries and taken on these myself on dozens

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When a particular Glasgow, on her name list — professional crews. The something over the for people working... recommended

When a particular Glasgow, on her name list — professional crews. The something over the for people working... recommended

others.

When Bob Palmer (*director of festivals*) and I arrived in 1987, the People's Palace was one of the first organisations with whom we made contact. We identified the problems there very quickly. I spent a lot of time engaged in meetings with the finance department; at least two senior politicians, and skirmished with key museums and galleries officials in a bid to see what could be done about the museum's longer-term future. We generally stated the case at every possible opportunity: "The People's Palace could be one of the cornerstones of the 1990 programme, but not whilst it is so desperately understaffed and undersupported."

In the interim, in 1988, I bused a gut to get a Scottish Museums Council grant of £12,500 matched by GDC (*Glasgow District Council*) so that the medieval room could be restored and reopened. (We were successful, but only after embarrassing arguments with museums and galleries personnel of the time, who wanted to send the SMC cash back). (*The director of museums and galleries until early 1989 was Alasdair Auld, whose successor is Julian Spalding*).

At the same time, we offered any help we could to Elspeth and Michael

"The so-called Friends of the People's Palace . . . have, in my view, done more harm to the People's Palace cause within political circles than anybody could imagine"

aid. Funny how that never gets mentioned, isn't it?

My respect for Elspeth King's professional work, achievements, knowledge and scholarship knows no bounds. But in other respects it is qualified. I know how much she suffered from the indifference of former museums and galleries regimes, but this has taken its toll in her ability to garner help and support. She has, in my opinion, succeeded in alienating possible powerful supporters within the political systems.

This has happened for two reasons. The first is a disinclination to negoti-

about this city. That's nonsense. What they don't like is discussing problems on a defensive stance in public. It's the first basic rule of political negotiation. If you want something changed, get inside the tent and piss outwards, not the other way round. The door has constantly been open, but has anyone got in there to sort it out?

What absolutely incenses me about the present campaign is the insidious way in which the present crisis is somehow wrapped up in European Cultural Capital Year and a particular view of a "new" Glasgow which 1990 is somehow supposed to represent. The pathetic, factless, plank-walking, anti-1990-ism of McLay, Kelman, Savage (*Farquar McLay, James Kelman, Hugh Savage*) and all the rest is an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce.

Nobody involved in that "campaign" has the slightest idea, not the faintest notion, of what is actually happening in 1990, let alone who is doing it, what it actually represents and how the funds are being allocated. None of them has ever had any contact with my office or the individuals who've been working, for almost three years, with something like 400 active and engaged organisations in Glasgow.

claim — the biggest photography

"The pathetic, factless, plank-walking, anti-1990-ism of McLay, Kelman, Savage and all the rest is an embarrassment to this city and all of its cultural workforce"

portrait projects ever undertaken as far as we know? The Ruchazie project — community theatre by and about the people who live there. Clyde Unity Theatre commissioning new pieces about Aids. The Needleworks banners project — 12 banners by people living in different communities. The Glasgow Fair celebrations. The Gorbals Fair Society programme. The South Side multi-cultural workers' projects, or Asian Artists, or Springburn Museum, or Clydebank Youth Theatre, or Writing Together, or the Youth Exchange programme, or Rarin' to Go (for and by Glasgow's older citizens), or, or, or?

sphere of the district council, or what we are doing for Glasgow and its organisations.

I've been involved, one way or another, with communities and communities of artists in the north of England, in Wales, here and abroad for many years now, and integrity is central to everything I've done. And now I've simply had enough of being told that the exhaustive and dedicated work of the past few years is in the name of nothing worthwhile.

In fact I find it offensive. Time will prove that we have revolutionised the way in which public and private support, in partnership, can invigorate a sense of public culture in an urban context without artistic or political compromise. I can call upon example after example, in this city, now, to prove that point. What remains is the challenge of making its effects permanent (already, in some capital senses, achieved).

If you and your colleagues are going to persist with the "sanitised 1990 Glasgow" fantasy, you had better be prepared to prove your point with the facts, financial or otherwise. I insist that you stop linking our name with the current protest.

This is a private and confidential letter between us and must not be used in any public way whatsoever.

in

ART PATERSON



King's role at palace raises new row

23/7/90

By KIRSTY SCOTT

THE Elspeth King affair resurfaced last night, in developments likely to cause fresh uproar among her supporters.

It is understood that some of Ms King's responsibilities as curator of the People's Palace may be taken over by the new keeper of social history, Mr Mark O'Neill, a post many expected Ms King to be given.

It is also believed that her deputy, Mr Michael Donnelly, is set to meet city officials today to discuss his role within the Museums and Art Galleries department. A City official has denied there have been any changes.

It appears that on Friday Ms King spoke to Mr O'Neill and later Mr Julian Spalding, director of museums and galleries, over changes in her managerial responsibilities. It is understood these may include still being allowed to draft but no longer being authorised to sign official letters from the palace.

There have also been suggestions that Mr O'Neill, to familiarise himself with his new role, may assume some of the palace responsibilities at the moment held by Ms King.

Last night, however, Mr Spalding insisted that there had been no change in the responsibilities of Ms King and none in Mr Donnelly's position at the People's Palace.

It is understood that these latest developments have outraged King supporters who are examining the matter. Both her solicitor and her union are thought to be studying the issue.

The King controversy began several weeks ago when Ms King failed to win the post of the city's keeper of social history. Following interviews by a panel of city officials, Mr O'Neill was appointed. He had previously held the post of curator of the city's Springburn Museum.

Mr Donnelly, meanwhile, has applied for Mr O'Neill's vacated post.

Ms King eventually withdrew from a grievance procedure she had started against the council. She was known to be unhappy at the row over the affair, which many claimed had been distorted by wider political issues.

Last night Council leader Mr Pat Lally said he knew nothing of any new developments.

"I do know that the head of the department for which Elspeth King works is Mark O'Neill. He was appointed to that role and I would expect him to be running that department, otherwise we would be paying him for nothing," he said.

Mr O'Neill was unavailable for comment last night.

Dear Sir,

The critical failure and financial collapse of Glasgow's Glasgow and the continued attempts of Pat Lally, Julian Spalding, Mark O'Neill and now Douglas Clelland to somehow shift responsibility on to the curator of the People's Palace is shameful; it is inflicting enormous damage to the reputation of the city. Their cynical attitude has made the 'Elspeth King affair' the central cultural issue of 1990. As an exercise in character assassination, of an individual expressly forbidden to speak on her own behalf, it is comparable to the Stalker affair; like it, its roots lie in injustice and cover-up.

When Douglas Clelland remarks on the "tremendous vacuum" in the lead up to Glasgow's Glasgow, this can have nothing to do with the People's Palace. In 1987 the museum achieved the artistic coup of the year with the commissioning and completion of the Ken Currie Glasgow Mural Cycle. In 1988 its curators successfully staged the Celtic Centenary Exhibition, mounted the exhibition to mark the centenary of Keir Hardie's Labour Party, and opened the permanent Cottier Stained Glass Gallery. In both years the palace attracted record visitor figures, rivalling some national museums.

The "vacuum" he refers to existed at Kelvingrove, or "Kelvingrave", as one critic describes it. This failure, of the then director, Alistair Auld, led to the creation of the Festivals Unit in 1987. It was in May of the same year that Mr Clelland conceived his idea of a mega-exhibition, and in August held his first meeting with the new Festivals Unit team to discuss the practicalities of staging it. Then in October the team met Elspeth King to discuss her own ideas for 1990.

Encouraged by their support she produced plans for the complete renewal of one third of the entire display of the museum, embracing the history of the city from medieval times to the end of the 18th century. She also proposed two large exhibitions for 1990:

1. The now highly successful Glasgow Fair event, and;
2. The major retrospective of the life and work of Glasgow-born designer and connoisseur, Daniel Cottier.

While Ms King was being encouraged to think big by Neil Wallace and Bob Palmer of the Festivals Unit, no mention was made of Mr Clelland's proposals. Mr Wallace is on record with his statement that "The People's Palace could be one of the cornerstones of the 1990 programme, but not while it is so desperately understaffed and under-supported".

After "embarrassing arguments" with the Kelvingrove hierarchy, who not only opposed their efforts but actively

Scottish Museum Council, Messrs Palmer and Wallace took the hint and abandoned the People's Palace as a "key venue". And the man in charge at Kelvingrove, Alistair Auld, director of Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, was later invited to take early retirement with a massive golden handshake, reputed to be somewhere in the region of £100,000.

Meanwhile negotiations with Douglas Clelland continued apace; the Arches were identified and in a climate of great secrecy the initial team of The Words and the Stones was

the enterprise increased along with the budget. When Mr Clelland and Ms King eventually met face to face at the Festivals Unit offices on April 12, 1988 matters were already cut and dried. The Words and the Stones would be the "major event of 1990"; it would not be held at the People's Palace; it

The team would be under Mr Clelland's supervision and provide him with research back-up and unrestricted access to the People's Palace collections. In return she was offered an unspecified salary and an additional member of staff to compensate for her own inevitable absence from



Exhibitionists: Douglas Clelland doing the groundwork for Glasgow's Glasgow

King: the de

The Elspeth King affair continues to cause c

other Glasgow figures write an open reply

of the Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition, in a



in the cellars of Central Station with John Bampton (left). Inset: Elspeth King

Defence case

controversy. James Kelman, Billy Connolly and 13
to comments made by Doug Clelland, originator
an interview in last week's Scotland on Sunday

attempt to move the People's Palace collections into a commercial exhibition was little short of a betrayal of Glasgow District Council's principle of free access to museums.

It was also a breach of faith with the thousands of ordinary Scottish and Glaswegian people who had gifted material so generously to the People's Palace on the understanding it would be accessible to every-

King's reputation within the museums service is undisputed; it goes beyond the boundaries of this country. In her considered opinion The Words and the Stones exhibition was set for disaster, she had serious doubts over its academic and professional competence.

It is for the courageous stand taken by Ms King that she is now being victimised.

tion that in spite of massive funding, enormous political clout and fine media coverage, Mr Clelland's exhibition is a disaster. This was predicted by Ms King when Julian Spalding sought her help to bail out the flagship several months before its launch. Her assistant, Michael Donnelly, also arrived at similar conclusions in his own separate assessment. Both reports independently pointed to the absence of any coherent story line and noted its 'object' rather than 'person' centred approach. Given the very high admission charge, the semi-derelict environment of Jamaica Street and the total lack of parking facilities, both

could ever hope to achieve the 1.2 million visitors required to secure a return on the financial outlay.

But both reports were rejected as "unhelpful". In August 1989 the board of directors, including Mr Spalding and certain city councillors, agreed that "the project was on course" and a month later the district council confirmed its "unanimous support". Little more than a week ago, halfway through the 30-week run, came the news that Glasgow's Glasgow is set for a loss of £23.5m. If it closes immediately the loss rises to £23.8m. The confident prediction of 1.2 million visitors is revealed as a strange sort of joke, with the figure at the half-way mark now established at some 160,000 people.

Mr Clelland and assorted others are now running around like headless chickens in an effort to escape culpability; they seek to make Ms King the scapegoat while at the same time heaping infantile abuse on anyone else who dares ask awkward questions. The 1990 "cultural workforce" headed by Mr Lally, leader of the Labour-controlled district council, has now decided the exhibition is to continue sailing; admission charges are reduced from £4 to £1. In this way a projected £23.8m deficit can be transformed into a £23.5m deficit, and the embarrassment of the cultural flagship sinking 15 weeks out of port, averted.

Yours sincerely,
Freddie Anderson, Norman Bissell, Ronnie Boyd, Billy Connolly, Ned Donaldson, Leslie Forster, James Kelman, Tommy Kays, Janette McGinn, Jim McKay, Ian McKechnie, Farquhar McLay, Brendan McLaughlin, Hugh Savage,

Elspeth King

Crisis over King affair

SSACK

Continued from Page 1

loyal to Lally, and another group in the middle, the critical factor in this issue.

Ms King's lawyer, Mr Rod McKenzie, of Harpers, said yesterday that if she is unsuccessful at next week's appeal proceedings, she will bring a claim of sex discrimination by the council to a industrial tribunal. Senior officials believe this claim to be ridiculous and are preparing a powerful case to disprove it.

Mr McKenzie said that he was not being permitted to represent her at Friday's meeting. The council's disputes procedure was silent on this point and it had "chosen to interpret them that I am not permitted to be there. We feel that is wrong and will be letting the council know".

A group of around 100 of her supporters protested outside the City Chambers yesterday. Their attempts to have a delegation received by Labour councillors including deputy leader Bailie Jean McFadden and Councillor Charles Davison who

chairs the arts committee were rejected.

Mr Stewart MacLennan, an executive member of the city Labour Party who stressed he was speaking only as an Elspeth King supporter, said: "The way we have been treated is appalling. Has no one told the Glasgow councillors that the walls are coming down all over Europe and they should not be erected here."

"We, as members of the Labour Party, will not tolerate our councillors acting in this way. We already have strong indications that a majority of members may soon be coming round to the thought that a full review of the case should be carried out."

Mr MacLennan added: "Pat Lally has been hiding behind this nonsense of the case being sub judice which has been exposed for the sham that it was. He has nothing to hide behind now and as soon as he returns to Glasgow he should speak to the people he is supposed to serve and tell them what is going on."

FOCUS ON INCO

Demonstrators express support for Elspeth King outside the City Chambers yesterday.

New move in Museum row as chief speaks out

**THE deputy director
of the People's Pal-
ace could be moved
from his post.**

By ROB
ROBERTSON

Council sources have revealed there is a growing campaign to move Michael Donnelly from the museum on Glasgow Green.

The moves, within the ruling Labour group, follow an alleged outburst by Mr Donnelly last night to a freelance journalist regarding the post of the new Keeper Of Social History in Glasgow.

All council employees are prohibited from speaking to the press.

Elsbeth King, who runs the People's Palace, was passed over for the post in favour of Springburn Museum curator, Mark O'Neill.

Since then there has been a massive public campaign of opposition over the decision.

Mr Donnelly allegedly accused the Labour group on Glasgow District Council of "being quiet for weeks" on the issue.

He said at a public meeting that he could not keep quiet any longer and that the pressure of the Elspeth King affair had deeply affected the museum's work.

Mr Donnelly is quoted as saying: "I'm not going to resign, but they can do what they like with me. They've done enough damage to Elspeth."

Pat Lally, district council leader, said: "His personal relationship may have affected his view on who he is employed by. It might be that he would benefit from a change of environment."

Mr Donnelly was unavailable for comment

Palace rebel faces job move

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By JOHN MacCALMAN,
Municipal Correspondent

A MUSEUM official's outburst on the Elspeth King affair will almost certainly result in his being moved from his position as second in command at the People's Palace in Glasgow.

Mr Michael Donnelly, a close colleague of Ms King during her years of struggle to develop the now much-acclaimed museum on Glasgow Green, knew he was risking his job by breaking his silence on the controversy.

Mr Donnelly lambasted the Labour and trade union movements for failing to follow through their declared support for Ms King at a public meeting on Thursday. Councillor Patrick Lally, leader of the Labour administration on Glasgow District Council, later said Mr Donnelly could be moved "for his own good".

The King controversy began earlier this year when the People's Palace curator was passed over for a new post as Keeper of Social History in favour of Mr Mark O'Neill, curator of Springburn

Museum. Staff were forbidden to speak publicly on the issue during the ensuing debate.

Mr Donnelly's patience was finally strained by press coverage suggesting that peace had broken out between Ms King and her employers.

At a public meeting organised by the Elspeth King Defence Committee, Mr Donnelly spoke of the "continuing sordid conspiracy" over the new appointment.

Councillor Lally later said: "I'm getting concerned that his personal relationship may be clouding his view of whom he is actually employed by. He is employed by the museums and art galleries department, not by any particular individual in that department."

"He appears to be in danger of jeopardising his employment and it might be he would benefit from a change of environment. Serious consideration will be given to this. He has been with us a number of years and we wouldn't like to lose him," Councillor Lally added.

THE Outsider column is a most appropriate place from which to take stock of my time with Glasgow Museums, for indeed I have always been an outsider in a profession dominated by the kudos of the commercial art market. My vocation and that of Elspeth King have always been quite different in origin. For us the establishment of social history in museums was not a smart career move, but a sacred cause, and for the past 16 years we have dedicated every day of our lives to it.

The aim was to recreate the People's Palace in the spirit of its founders by adding to it collections acquired for their human significance, rather than their artistic curiosity or intrinsic value, and to put the heart back into a museum service which had made little advance beyond the magpie values of the curio cabinet. For that reason we drafted a collecting policy which, until Julian Spalding scrapped it, was the only one of its kind in Glasgow Museums.

The fortunes of our chosen museum could not have been more low. Renamed the "Old Glasgow Museum" by a Kelvingrove administration hostile to its very existence, it had become, as the author Alasdair Gray recalls, "like a gigantic lumber room full of objects too fascinating to throw away, but which no other place could use". This situation was in no way attributable to its successive curators who like ourselves were the victims of a class-based hostility which regarded the museum and its East End location as effectively beyond the pale.

Ancient heating systems, antediluvian lighting and nineteenth-century display cases were the rule. Storage and workshop space was non-existent, there was no photographic equipment, or even such basics as a modern typewriter. The museum had no shop, cafeteria, publications, postcards or publicity materials. The winter gardens were closed, semi-derelict, and awaited what seemed inevitable demolition. Above all the environment of the museum, the historic Glasgow Green, was being systematically run down, as depopulation by comprehensive redevelopment tore the heart out of the historic communities of Calton, Bridgeton and Gorbals.

With no regular transport, collecting was very difficult and it took several years to break down institutionalised resistance to demands for services which had been withheld for almost a generation. For more than five years we were resolutely denied access to purchase funds, and many of our earliest acquisitions were self-financed or acquired via petty cash.

Much of our foundation collections such as stained glass, cast iron, ceramic tiles, and all kinds of domestic objects and photographs were recovered from derelict buildings in district council ownership. Large objects frequently had to be carried across town manually. Always the working conditions were dirty and often dangerous.

Our storage, when we finally acquired some, was on two floors of a derelict factory; our Dexion shelving we stripped and reassembled from an abandoned cash and carry warehouse

The dirty, immoral witch-hunt that is the Elspeth King Affair

OUTSIDER

MICHAEL DONNELLY, second-in-command at the People's Palace in Glasgow, risked his job last week when he spoke publicly for the first time in the Elspeth King Affair. Breaking his silence since Mark O'Neill, Curator of the Springburn Museum, was appointed to the new city post of Keeper of Social History, Donnelly spoke of "continuing sordid campaigning" over the new appointment. In this Outsider he takes stock of the 16 years he and People's Palace Curator Elspeth King worked together, the controversial plan for the People's Palace conceived by the city's Director of Museums and Art Galleries, Julian Spalding, and the role in the affair of Pat Lally, Leader of the District Council Labour Administration.

ry, and stained glass. This last exhibition and collection arose quite naturally out of our regular fieldwork and won for us a European award. Yet in the year of our triumph we could only muster an annual visitor figure of 80,000. The new director, Alasdair Auld, was openly hostile to the concept of social history and publicly declared at every opportunity that the People's Palace was "an unsuitable building in an undesirable area."

In the winter of 1981-82 a crisis was reached. A shut-down in the heating system at the height of a severe freeze-up led to the loss of almost half of the 80-year-old palm trees. Reports in the Glasgow Herald led to the personal intervention of a local businessman, who generously offered free labour and hessian wrapping to try to save the remaining trees. He subsequently contacted the Lord Provost and the directors of museums and parks and was astonished to encounter a negative and suspicious response to his generosity.

His response was, in association with a group of others, to establish the Friends of the People's Palace as a support body and pressure group to save the winter gardens and defend the museum. From the very beginning their campaign received the wholehearted support of the Glasgow Herald and we are grateful for it.

The subsequent story of the palace's

slow but steady reversal of fortunes to the point where it is now one of the most popular and influential museums in Britain, with an annual visitor total which will this year top the half million, is the plus side of a rags-to-riches story.

But what of the negative? The drip, drip, drip of hostility towards the palace and its staff by the directorate at Kelvingrove had effectively poisoned the well at the City Chambers. That is the true origin of some of the obscene attacks on Elspeth King emanating from "unidentified" sources in George Square — "she's out of control", "she needs house-trained", etc. There is, of course, a much deeper root to this hostility, directed at Elspeth, myself, the Friends of the People's Palace, and most recently the writers, artists, and ordinary Glaswegians who have supported us, and why it has increased in direct proportion to the popularity of the institution. The answer lies in the wider political arena, and has its roots in the steady abandonment by the leadership of the Labour Party of its historic commitment to socialism.

That process, combined with the wish locally to bury the facts of a past which had become inconvenient, and to superimpose a new, sanitised, marketable image of the city, required not a critical social history rooted in the verities of our existence, but a bland, self-congratulatory hype, which found

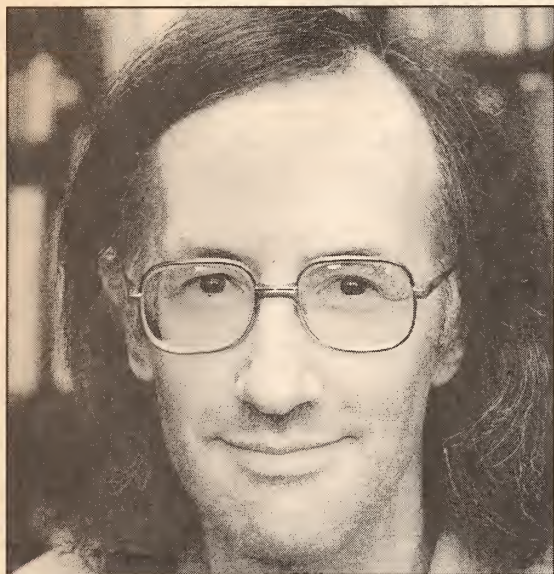
its true apotheosis in the patronising "Mr Happy" gow's Miles Better".

The daily victimisation King as an obscene obligation gow's year as European Culture has finally lifted the Labour administration who the leadership of Pat Lally a years of virtually unchallenge has finally hit rock bottom.

When a dream dies the tires, for instead of leading who have loyally voted for greater democratic freedom countability, they have become reaucratic conspiracy against The Tammany Hall style of amid, with its utterly un concepts of junior and seniors answerable to an al Boss, is the very antithesis of democracy envisaged by Morris or Keir Hardie.

Instead of building upon but progressive concept of socialism established by twentieth-century Liberals, they ated a monolithic, hierarchy of career-orientated, imperment, without the slightest of democratic control. In a stem antiquated concepts su lic service have no place, sel the name of the game, and i who rock the boat can be crushed with ruthless efficien





●MICHAEL DONNELLY

Mr Lally and his sycophantic apparatchiks have seriously to consider spending £15,000 on a plate-glass barrier to protect themselves from the justified wrath of their own citizens then the writing is indeed on the wall.

Their continued exercise of power and control relies upon a suppression of dissent by the distribution of rewards and punishments. The resulting climate of intellectual and moral cowardice, cynical alienation and apathy has rotted the fabric of our society and reduced a once-vibrant movement for social change into a cowardly, lumpen tribalism. This is the lost generation upon which the "greed is good", "look out for Number One" sharkpool ethics of Thatcherite new-model capitalism has flourished like poison algae on a stagnant pond.

When upon the recommendation of a Conservative Minister for the Arts Glasgow was awarded the title of European City of Culture, and the image-brokers, concept cowboys and cultural carpet-baggers of the heritage and arts industries jetted in, they found a greedy and gullible audience in an intellectually bankrupt administration. Following in their jetstream came the speculators, to sew up deals with the born-again barrow-boys to whom culture was only a buzz-word for the latest scam.

While Elspeth King and I were commissioning the Ken Currie Murals to

pay tribute to the Calton Weavers, they were cancelling the People's Palace extensions. When we were researching and honouring the centenary of Keir Hardie's Scottish Labour Party, they were plotting the commercial exploitation of Glasgow Green, and trying to destroy Paddy's Market.

Alasdair Auld tried to privatise our stained-glass collection, but was thwarted by Mayfest officials and the trade union, UCATT, and was shortly afterwards ushered off the scene for lack of ambition.

Then the newly appointed Festival Unit's director struck fool's gold, in the "Words and the Stones". The words were bullshit, the stones were mill-stones, the result was "glas-botch". But what did that matter? After all, £3.5m was a small price to pay to marginalise and if possible undermine an institution whose very name was poison to their lips. Elspeth King was informed by Neil Wallace that a new director of museums was being "head-hunted" and that "he" would have to give three months' notice.

Faced with the prospect of a third male director who might fall into line with the prevailing death wish on the palace, she, out of desperation, applied for a job which she had never coveted. To her own astonishment she was the sole woman and Scot to be interviewed. In the absence of any

equal opportunities procedure, she was interviewed by a panel of 15 males. The result foretold by Mr Wallace held good: enter Julian Spalding, fresh from the sacking of the entire staff of the National Museum for Labour History at Manchester.

His master plan, like that of his successful rival at the Victoria & Albert, was the complete tearing-up of the existing department and the creation of a new corporate identity. Implicit to the success of this was a cowed and demoralised staff, and a complacent union offering no critical opposition to a completely new tier of business, exhibition and collection managers.

The widely perceived individual identity of the People's Palace was anathema to such a centralist, headquarters mentality, and so our time for "the treatment" had finally if inevitably arrived. No dialogue was possible on such crucial ethical considerations as the introduction of charges at the McLellan Galleries, or the transfer of hundreds of municipally-owned objects to Glasgow's Glasgow with its hefty entrance charges. To every objection, back came the statement: "I support Pat Lally, and Pat Lally supports me, and I'll do whatever I like whatever you say."

The low opinion of Julian Spalding for both Elspeth King and me has been obvious ever since his first official visit. On that he cancelled our eighteenth-century displays for 1990 and promised a reduced life expectancy for our half-built early Glasgow displays. That same evening he was in Springburn Museum praising to the skies Mark O'Neill's alleged pioneering efforts. The Trojan horse was already in place and I knew from that day on that Mark was in and that we were out. Within a few days it was common knowledge throughout the department and, as Janey Buchan has courageously revealed, also in the City Chambers.

What followed has become known as the Elspeth King Affair, but that title is too bland for what is one of the dirtiest and most immoral witch-hunts since the days of McCarthy. The chief witch-finder is Lally, and that is why he threatens me in classic Stalinist fashion with removal for my "own good". It is inconceivable to him that I am expressing opposition to his behaviour out of principle, so he foully attributes my alleged "clouded judgment" to my "personal relationship" with Elspeth King.

For the past 17 years Elspeth King and I have lived together in mutual love, fidelity and respect, and I defy even the gutterati of the Sun to make anything of that. It is the strength of our relationship, and the constant support of the general public, which have given us the strengths to stand up to the years of abuse which we have endured in our thankless posts.

But in the final analysis it is the People's Palace and what it has come to represent that are under attack, because Mr O'Neill knows exactly what is expected of him. He does not share the ideals of the people who have generously gifted their artefacts to this museum. "They want the great social-

Local

the first newspaper for with the Dunoon Observer, 10s per week) a refusal to the public continuing to send me a regular debate have been d columns, these past few years, for which Argyll Council seems to be responsible. The other politicians denounce the neglect of authority, and credit for having thought therein, I couldn't help a paradox. There is a gap in Scotland for a principle of making local more local. I'm sure that's

Political outcry over People's Palace sacking

THE SACKED People's Palace assistant curator, Michael Donnelly, yesterday received support from political sources shocked and angry at his dismissal for gross misconduct.

Mr Donnelly has decided to appeal against his dismissal in an attempt to make sure the issues involved are aired in public. Although he is not optimistic at his chances of reinstatement he is determined to have his questions answered.

He was sacked on Thursday night for gross misconduct after accusing Glasgow District Council in a newspaper article of mishandling what became known as the Elspeth King affair.

Last night Janey Buchan, Labour MEP for Glasgow, said she found it hard to believe that a Labour-controlled authority could carry out such a sacking.

"It lends itself to the view that is percolating throughout Glasgow at the moment that Julian Spalding, director of museums and art galleries, and his team have handed the loaded pistol to council leader Pat Lally, who was daft enough to fire it," she said.

Stewart McLennan, Labour Party agent in Glasgow Pollok constituency which has already condemned the council's Labour administration for its attitude to Elspeth King, said there was no doubt there would be widespread outrage in Labour circles over Mr Donnelly's sacking.

By GRAEME STEWART

Mr McLennan was one of a number of prominent Labour activists and members of the Glasgow literary and artistic community who demonstrated outside the City Chambers earlier this year in protest at the way in Ms King had been treated.

Emphasising that he was speaking as an individual Labour Party member, Mr McLennan said the sacking would create more problems regarding the council's personnel policies.

"It also raises the question of civil liberties. What you have here is quite simply a situation in which an employee of Glasgow District Council has been treated in a way that a politically restricted member of staff in Thatcher's Civil Service would not have been treated, simply for expressing their right to speak," he said.

Mr Donnelly's newspaper article was a bitter attack on the council's treatment of People's Palace curator Elspeth King, who has lived with Mr Donnelly for the past 17 years.

Earlier this year she was passed over for the job of Glasgow's Keeper of Social History. The post was given to one of her protégés, Mark O'Neill, whom she appointed to the post of curator of the small Springburn Museum.

Mr Lally was last night unavailable for comment.

IT IS the left which tends to become involved in the most bitter internecine political warfare, and it is just such a Donnybrook which has enveloped Glasgow's director of museums and art galleries.

With the saga of the People's Palace boss, Elspeth King, and her failure to win the new post of keeper of social history, plus the interminable dispute over that event unfolding in recent weeks, there must have been occasions when Julian Spalding has wondered whether he should have left his position as head of Manchester's art galleries.

He has found himself the target of much vitriol. How has he aroused such emotions?

As an Englishman, he was perhaps unfortunate to be appointed during the bout of angst over the "Englising of Scotland," when it was argued that senior positions in the Scottish establishment, particularly the arts, were going to those from south of the Border.

He also came north with a mixed reputation; some hailed his achievement in tripling attendances at Manchester's galleries; others pointed to what they regarded as his crime of hanging paintings not by period but similarities of technique, and to redundancies he had made there.

Nevertheless, his reputation as being left-of-centre politically, and of making stuffy establishments more accessible to the public, should have stood him in good stead when he came, in April 1989, to a socialist city such as Glasgow.

According to one Glasgow arts administrator: "He's made a lot of changes, and it

The incomer caught in the middle

PROFILE

ON SATURDAY

Alan Dron examines the eventful Glasgow career of Julian Spalding, one of the principal figures in the saga of the People's Palace

will take time to assess whether they will all pay off."

However, such changes had to be seen in the light of the previous standing of his fiefdom, which had been plagued by "bad management of international proportions".

"He's a good chap; I've got nothing against the man. I think he's to be respected, but very egotistical and ambitious to get on — but most people at that level are."

The Elspeth King debacle had not been of his making, but, he claimed, he had become embroiled with "the

loony left-wing" of the district council and some of the local intelligentsia.

Another well-known city arts organiser said Mr Spalding had "certainly shaken things up, and not necessarily in a bad way".

He had overseen a healthy mixture of painting exhibitions and was making better use of the temporary exhibition space at the city's main Kelvingrove gallery.

However, she added: "I think he's got a difficult managerial style; he's a charismatic character, and people like him usually are good at presenting ideas internally or publicly, but

aren't good at dealing with the nitty-gritty, about appreciating how change actually upsets people." He tended to be cavalier and so needed sensitive subordinates to sooth ruffled feathers and put the policy across, she said.

On the question of labour and social history, very much Ms King's area of expertise and one which Mr Spalding has been accused of trying to yuppify, she said: "He's been quite clear he doesn't want to sanitise Glasgow's history, but he wants to make everything more accessible and interesting. For some people, the whole question of labour and social history is about being grim, and that doesn't sit easily with the idea of making things fun."

The controversial Glasgow's Glasgow exhibition, which has been accused of just such a tidying up of the city's history, had not only been arranged before his time, but had gone ahead partly because the city's 1990 organisers had found few other ideas coming out of its museums service, she commented.

Indeed, there was evidence that Mr Spalding had deep reservations to the approach adopted in the exhibition.

Mr Spalding's former boss in Sheffield, Frank Constantine, agreed that his old subordinate could be abrasive, at least superficially, but "most people found him very good to work for once you got past that."

"He can ruffle up establishment figures sometimes, as he tends to speak his mind ... I think he would probably want to cut through humbug, and there's plenty of that around. I appointed him, and never regretted it. I don't think Glasgow will regret it."



Julian Spalding: "He's got a difficult managerial style"

Sacking protest held at Burrell

By KEITH BRUCE

THE SACKED assistant curator of the People's Palace, Mr Michael Donnelly, took his campaign for reinstatement to the door of the Burrell Collection yesterday and a seminar on patronage, censorship, and the arts being held under the auspices of the International Bar Association.

Mr Donnelly, writer and artist Alasdair Gray, and other supporters of the People's Palace campaign gathered outside the Burrell building in Pollok Park as Glasgow's director of art galleries and museums Mr Julian Spalding arrived at the seminar.

Mr Spalding welcomed the delegates by noting that Glasgow must be the only city to have built its revival around an art gallery.

Mr Donnelly claimed that his campaign was not concerned with his own personal position but with

the status of the social history of the city, which he said was becoming subordinate to the public relations effort.

The delegates to the seminar yesterday heard from a range of speakers from Europe and the United States on the subject of patronage, the problems surrounding private art collections and the public showing of art, and the implicit limitations placed on artists by patronage.

Today's session in the Albany Hotel deals with censorship and includes contributions from actors Prunella Scales and Paul Eddington.

About a dozen protesters welcomed the delegates with banners claiming that Mr Spalding's commitment to freedom of speech was reflected in his treatment of Mr Donnelly.

Mr Donnelly said he would be taking his case to internal appeal.

Glasgow Herald
Sept 13 1990



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IN 1866 the Victorian journalist G. A. Sala visited Glasgow, then at the height of its power as an industrial capital, serving a worldwide imperial market. Mr Sala was met by a civic deputation and given the contemporary version of a Glasgow's Miles Better tour of the West End, the art galleries, public and private, in the mansions of wealthy merchant princes. But Mr Sala was not deceived and after the official tour, chose to visit by himself the closes and wynds of the High Street, Saltmarket and the Stockwell.

His verdict was that his guides had produced a sanitised view of the city and that they had insulted his intelligence by inviting him to admire "a brass handle on a pigsty door". Behind that door lay "abomination of filth, misery and human neglect, at utter odds with the precepts of a Christian country."

While the city in which we live today is in many, if not all, respects far removed from the total and helpless squalor witnessed by Sala, the hypocrisy of his guides is alive, well, and flourishing in Glasgow. Many of the acute social problems witnessed by him in 1866 can be seen today in all their brutal horror in that other city of corporate identity and public relations, New York.

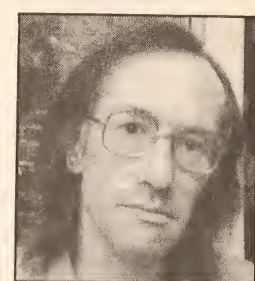
If Glasgow is to avoid some of the worst aspects of urban decline, with its attendant problems of ghettoisation and extremes of poverty and wealth, it must base its future on a sound and critical analysis of its cultural and political past and present.

To face up to that task with all its implications was a unique challenge implicit in the award of the city of culture title. But that opportunity was rejected and instead the district council allowed it to be hijacked by the concept cowboys and mythologists of the public relations industry.

Their object was not to hold up to inspection and critical analysis the radical past of this city with its unique contribution to the development of science, economics, democracy, co-operation and socialism. On the contrary, they considered much of this past to be inglorious, and anathematised those who take a pride in its achievements as, at best, negative-thinking and absurdly idealistic dreamers or, at worst, as unpatriotic, unreasonable troublemakers.

That is the real motivation for the persistent attacks upon myself and Elspeth King and, by extension, the People's Palace itself. That is also the reason for the financial underpinning of a rival and sanitised "official" history of the city known by its founders as Glasgow's Glasgow. It is also the reason for the vicious attacks upon the Workers City group who, together with associated writers and artists like Alasdair Gray, Jim Kelman, and Tom Leonard, have mounted a sustained and valiant critique against overwhelmingly powerful vested interests. I am proud to be associated with them in thought and deed, for they stand foursquare for the best qualities of this city, and are the living embodiment of its fighting spirit.

They recognise that the



By MICHAEL DONNELLY

"authorised image" of the "new Glasgow" as a sleek, shining post-industrial conurbation of corporate headquarters, populated by sharp-suited jet-setting entrepreneurs shuttling forth to wage war in the markets of New York, Tokyo, or Berlin is an obscene travesty which can only be sustained by the total erasure of the collective memory of this quintessentially proletarian city.

The role assigned to the now redundant workforce of this city as barmen, wine waiters, and domestic servants is a Thatcherite nightmare and is a future none but a slave would willingly embrace. But the brain transplant has not worked and the body is now rejecting it. That is why Glasgow's Glasgow, in spite of its massive funding, has abysmally failed. By rejecting its patronising myth, the people of this city have shown that, unlike their elected leaders, they are not prepared to sell their souls for fool's gold.

The personal tyranny of self-proclaimed arts impresario Julian Spalding, against myself, Elspeth King, and now Jude Burkhauser is symptomatic of the totalitarian behaviour now legitimised by a council who daily betray every moral precept of the socialist ethic they were elected to uphold. Unquestioning loyalty to the corporate identity fashioned at the whim of the head of department is now placed above all other allegiances.

This is a climate in which mediocrity thrives, and integrity of purpose can, and will, fatally damage your career prospects. Nineteen ninety, in spite of many successes such as the immensely courageous and innovative Jock Tamson's Bairns, the perceptive connoisseurship of Cyril Gerber, and the re-evaluation of the rich and impressive achievements of the Glasgow Girls, will inevitably go down in history as the year of the comen. The year when an intellectually bankrupt council rejected the best of the city's potential in order to provide one-night stands for international megastars like Pavarotti and Sinatra.

I have now been sacked from my post as assistant keeper of the People's Palace, but I have nothing to apologise for, nothing to retract. Unlike Mr Lally and Julian Spalding, I have never forgotten that my ultimate loyalty is to the people of Glasgow, and I will leave the verdict on my curatorship in their hands.

The staged photo session that pushed Michael into speaking out



Brian Gilda of Peoples, curator Elspeth King, museums director Julian Spalding, and artist Ken Currie below the paintings at the People's Palace.

By IAN GRAY

ELSPETH KING, curator of Glasgow's People's Palace, and Julian Spalding, director of Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, yesterday shared the same platform and for the first time publicly denied there was any rift between them.

A row broke out several weeks ago when a three-man team led by Mr Spalding appointed Mr Mark O'Neil, curator of Springburn Museum, to the post of keeper of social history. A committee was formed by people who felt the post should have gone to Ms King.

Yesterday, however, as Ms King

Peace breaks out at the Palace

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and Mr Spalding launched an illustrated guide to the People's Palace labour history paintings, both declared it was "business as usual".

Asked if the two were now speaking, Mr Spalding said: "We never were not speaking", while Ms King, asked if the hatchet was buried over

the appointment, said there was no hatchet to bury.

The guide to the paintings, meanwhile, which adorn the cupola roof of the People's Palace and were executed by Glasgow artist Ken Currie to depict 200 years of the city's labour history, has been published

thanks to sponsorship from Peoples, a Glasgow-based Ford dealership.

Sale of the booklets will generate fresh funds for other projects at the Palace.

Mr Brian Gilda, managing director of Peoples, said: "We are delighted to do this for the People's Palace — particularly when we remember the patronage of Henry Ford for the great Mexican painter Diego Rivera.

"Ken Currie's work is of a similar, heroic style, and is much admired. We like to think this booklet will help visitors to appreciate his work more fully."

A SPECIALIST security squad "swept" part of Glasgow City Chambers yesterday for hidden electronic bugs — hours before ICI directors held a board meeting there.

The meeting, in the Satinwood Suite, was the first time that directors of the giant company had held such a meeting in the UK outside of London.

Their business started at 9.15am and ended just before 1pm in time to gather for a civic lunch with Lord Provost Susan Baird.

ICI chairman Sir Denys Henderson, an Aberdonian, presented the city with a barometer made in 1911 and valued at £5000. It was engraved to mark the occasion.

He reminded his fellow directors that ICI had its roots in Scotland. The company was born out of a tiny chemicals and bleaching enterprise on Clydeside in the late eighteenth century.

The Lord Provost said afterwards: "A number of big companies have accepted our open invitation to hold their board meetings in Glasgow during our city of

culture year. It gets them out of London or whatever is their normal base and allows them to see for themselves the massive changes going on in our city. It also reminds them what we have to offer.

"ICI are the latest and I think the biggest company so far to accept our invitation. Not that their directors are unaware of the Scottish situation. They have a number of subsidiaries and business interests north of the border."

Most directors gathered the previous evening at Gleneagles Hotel for working meetings. After yesterday's lunch, the 20 captains of industry departed in two private jets from Glasgow Airport.

Sir Denys took away with him a "wee barrel" of Scotch whisky, a present from Glasgow District Council. Mr A.T.G. (Tony) Rodgers, currently chairman of the colours and fine chemicals division based in Manchester, has been appointed an executive director of ICI with effect from January next year.

Lally under attack as rift with district party comes to a head

By KEN SMITH

THE rift between Glasgow's Labour Party and the city's Labour councillors came to a head last night with leading councillors Mr Pat Lally and Mr Danny Crawford having to listen to a series of attacks on recent council decisions.

A meeting of Glasgow District Labour Party deplored the decision not to appoint Ms Elspeth King as Glasgow's keeper of social history; opposed any private development of Glasgow Green; and refused to drop a proposal to put PLO leader Mr Yasser Arafat forward as a possible freeman of the city, despite Councillor Lally's opposition.

After the meeting, party chairman Mr Archie Graham said of the city's Labour councillors: "They don't appear to be listening to the party as much as they did in the past."

The party stopped short of asking the Labour group on Glasgow District Council to overturn the decision not to appoint Ms King. Delegates felt that it would be unfair on Mr Mark O'Neill, already appointed to the post.

Glasgow District Labour Party consists of representatives from the constituency parties covering the 11 parliamentary seats in the city, affiliated trade unions, and socialist societies.

It is distinct from the Labour Group on Glasgow District Council which is made up of the Labour councillors elected to the council. Councillor Lally is group leader and Councillor Crawford group secretary.

The Glasgow District Labour Party sets the manifesto for district elections and provides volunteers to fight elections alongside councillors.

Last night's meeting, attended by nearly 70 delegates, passed a resolution overwhelmingly exploring the decision not to appoint Ms King to the social history post.

Said Mr Graham: "The district party felt it had to comment on the sterling work Elspeth King has done. She has made a tremendous contribution to the preservation of working-class history and to the success of the People's Palace albeit with a limited budget. We were extremely disappointed she was not appointed to the post."

The District Labour Party is now seeking a meeting with the Labour group on the council to ensure that there is not a repetition.

The decision not to seek an overturning of the appointment does suggest that the Elspeth King affair may be drawing to a

close, at least within Labour Party circles.

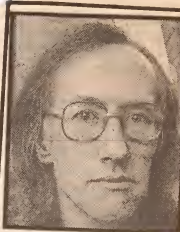
Councillor Lally's embarrassment did not end there as delegates then went on to remind councillors that the party's policy was to oppose any private development on Glasgow Green, including Flesher's Haugh where the district council has invited three private developers to submit plans for a massive waterworld and leisure complex.

Delegates voted to inform the Labour group not to take any final decision until the party had been consulted.

Finally the district party decided to continue to investigate the possibility of putting Mr Arafat up for a possible honour from the city despite Councillor Lally's known opposition.

It will discuss it further with interested parties before taking a final decision on whether to put his name forward.

Food industry creed attacked THE FAMOUS CARPET SUPERSTITION



MICHAEL DONNELLY

THE Evening Times must have a temporary shortage of horticultural correspondents if they cannot recognise a plant of dubious origin.

Mr McCreadie's diatribe on the Scotia Bar, its clientele, and the small group of individuals who compose Workers City is so offensively inaccurate as to give the strong impression that he has never set foot in the bar.

As the ex-museum curator referred to, I can assure him that working in filthy, dangerous conditions in trenches, sewers, attics, cellars or on high scaffolds were all in a day's work to me.

Workers City includes weavers, gas-fitters, and bricklayers as well as students and writers - who are much too intelligent to indulge in the moronic workerism displayed in his abusive letter.

MICHAEL DONNELLY, 343 West Princes Street, Glasgow

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TRIBUNAL IS TOLD OF DONNELLY'S SILENCE

SACKED People's Palace assistant curator Michael Donnelly let his lawyer do the talking at his appeal hearing.

And Councillor James McCarron told an industrial tribunal in Glasgow that the lawyer, Angela Mullane, caused a great deal of procedural wrangle.

Councillor McCarron, who chaired the

By JOHN KERR

appeal, said he was astonished Mr Donnelly would say nothing.

But, after considerable deliberation, the panel decided he had been fairly dismissed by the council. "We honestly felt he was the author of the article that vilified the council in a scurrilous way and also attacked his own director."

Councillor McCarron was giving evidence on the third day of the tribunal

where Mr Donnelly claims he was unfairly sacked.

He was dismissed during the "Elspeth King affair" when his boss at the People's Palace - and the woman with whom he lived - missed out on the post of Keeper of Social History.

It is alleged Mr Donnelly wrote an article in the Glasgow Herald in which he criticised council leader Pat Lally and museums director Julian Spalding.

During a disciplinary inquiry, and again at the appeal, Mr Donnelly refused to confirm or deny that he was the author.

Councillor McCarron said today it had been a very difficult appeal to hear. It was only the second time an appellant had been represented by a lawyer, it was normally a shop steward.

"There was a great deal of procedural wrangle over differences in practice. I am not a lawyer, I am a layman," he said.

Councillor McCarron said: "Despite the difficulties, I did not act unfairly and after hearing all the evidence it was concluded that the right decision had been made."

The tribunal continues.

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I thought you might like to
read this letter from "Dodie" I wrote
after Alasdair's bit. If you had not
already read it.

Ned

TINTIN AND THE OIL MYSTERY

Sir: In a fascinating article ("The Trials of Tintin", 13 July), Francis Wheen writes that "in France and Belgium Professor Calculus has, bizarrely, for many years been associated with a brand of olive oil".

Having spent my childhood in France, and having learnt much of the French language from Herge's works, I know this connection is not bizarre at all: the eclectic scientist is better known on the other side of the Channel as "Professeur Tournesol" (Professor Sunflower), and has consequently been advertising sunflower oil on French television for many years. As for why Tintin should be selling Honda cars in Japan, don't ask me.

NICK SCHOENFELD
Manchester

THE WILY PUBLIC SERVANT

Sir: Alasdair Gray concludes his piece on the museum worker Elspeth King (Heroes & Villains, 13 July) with the words: "Hooray for public servants who are not politically clever. Britain is rotten with the other sort."

Quickly passing over the hypocrisy of a Scottish nationalist such as Mr Gray expressing concern for *Britain*, I beg to differ with his thesis. Public servants fall into two kinds: those whose low self-esteem kept them out of the private sector and those who are committed to a better society, and who willingly work for less than their market worth to bring it about. There are too many of the former – "jobsworths" – but they are being shaken out by the silent revolution of performance management that is sweeping through our public services. In any case, those are not Mr Gray's target.

Commitment to the public service involves not only technical competence – or, let's hope and pray, brilliance – but also a degree of diplomatic skill and (oh, dirty word) pragmatism. I happen to be a fan of Mr Gray both for his artistic skill and his candour. He should be the first to admit that to succeed you have to build trust. That's what "politically clever" public servants do.

May I suggest that Mr Gray follow the example of Vaclav Havel and Mario Vargas Llosa and get his feet wet, politically speaking. I did once, and I can tell him it is a character-building experience.

MIKE KILLINGWORTH
London W2

CONFESSING CRIMES

Sir: Your article on Judith Ward ("Unreliable Confessions", 6 July) highlights again the fallibility of testimony taken from a

LETTERS

mentally vulnerable suspect. It is hardly surprising that some people cannot cope with the trauma of lengthy, often accusatory questioning in an environment which is generally disorientating – some would say deliberately so. Research in 1980 for the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure found 25 per cent of suspects brought to the police station showed visible signs of psychological stress.

The Runciman Commission on Criminal Justice now has the opportunity to examine afresh the extent to which police questioning strategies combine with a vulnerable suspect's mental state to produce palpably false evidence. As a minimum precaution, it should recommend the taking of such evidence only in the presence of a solicitor. More importantly, all those involved in the investigation and prosecution of crime must be made to realise the psychological states in which confessing occurs.

IAN BYNOE
Mind, London W1

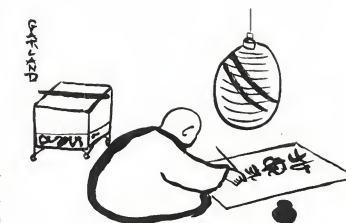
Sir: Thank you for your article on the case of Judith Ward. In the past six years this commission has worked on the cases of the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire Seven. During Annie Maguire's visit to Ireland in 1985 she asked us to take up Ms Ward's case.

I visited Judith in prison some weeks ago and found her as described in your article – articulate, bright and cheery, and hopeful that her case would be reopened shortly.

NUALA KELLY
Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas, Dublin

AFTER 'TUBBY' GULLY-THOMAS

Sir: I wonder if I might trespass upon your columns to supply a footnote to the delightful memoir of my old colleague HJK "Tubby" Gully-Thomas ("Shadows on the



Grass", 13 July). The figure seated behind the Rev "Gilly" Gillingham at the Essex v New Zealand match of 1927 and smoking his customary "Auld Shag" pipe tobacco is, unless my eyes deceive me, no less than B.C.C.I "Chinaman" MacLeod.

MacLeod, who perhaps achieved more than anybody else in the furtherance of our beloved "summer game" in the Outer Hebrides, was an Elder of the Free Presbyterian Church who, none the less, believed (rightly, in my view) that we were all, regardless of creed or sect, destined to be accounted for on the One Great Scoreboard and should not let differences of doctrinal interpretation form a barrier to true sportsmanship. Thinking now of his many midge-infested innings on the peerless machair of Harris and Benbecula, one cannot help wondering what he would have made of today's players with their so-called "groin strains" and "bruised fingers".

Alas, he was to be ejected, two years later, from the congregations of his countrymen as a result of his association with a limited-over Sunday match against a "Pope of Rome's XI" in South Uist. Not for him the easy option that was to be taken, 60 years later, by England's Lord Chancellor!

One can only look forward, as I am sure "Tubby" himself does, to a reunion in that great (and, I am sure, ecumenical) Long Room in the sky.

B.S.E. MACPHERSON-STRUTT
Isle of Skye

THE TASTES OF THE SAINSBURYS

Sir: The preferences of the Sainsbury family in its building designs are, indeed, hard to figure (Up & Down the City Road, 13 July).

Those who think the new Sainsbury Wing at the National Gallery is bland should ride a 24 or 29 bus three miles northwards to Camden Road, where they will see the most hideous edifice erected in London in recent years. What appears to be a cross between the Lloyd's Building and a bulk grain carrier in dry dock slung between grey girders is, in fact, one of Sainsbury's latest supermarkets. The thought that it replaced a fabulous art nouveau factory building erected in the Twenties for ABC bakeries makes it that much worse.

GEOFFREY SLOCOMBE
London N13

Letters should be addressed to *The Independent Magazine*, 40 City Road, London EC1Y 2DB (fax 071-962 0016). Please include a daytime telephone number and mark both letter and envelope 'Magazine Letters'. We reserve the right to shorten letters.

By BACKBENCHER

QUIETLY, without consultation, the Labour administration has introduced a new corporate lapel badge for council members and employees. The existing badge was silvery. The new badge is green. For some reason, quite a number of council employees are refusing to don the new official city colours. I wonder why?

Poll fear for Janet

LABOUR is rushing ahead to stage an early by-election in the vacant North Kelvin ward. Polling will now take place on September 19 and Labour's candidate will be schoolm'am Janet Andrews.

The vacancy, of course, was caused by Councillor Danny Crawford's resignation to take up a full-time post within the NHS.

Meanwhile rumours persist in the Scotia Bar of plans to field a Workers' City candidate to give Labour a fright.

No wonder they are showing indecent haste at George Square.

Let there be light!

NEXT time the electricity bill drops through the letter box, be grateful that you are not responsible for the floodlighting arrangements at Glasgow Cathedral.

Council officials have just costed what they reckon the bill will be when the evening lighting scheme starts on a regular basis.

They have reported that it will cost something in the region of £7000 a year.

Or, put another way, the full poll tax payments for 20 community charge payers. What a lot of light!

Mick the terrible!

MICHAEL DONNELLY was sacked by the Labour establishment some time back for daring to criticise them.

Now, predictably, he has failed in his industrial tribunal appeal.

The People's Palace ex-deputy now plans to write a book telling all about life in Culture City under the Socialist regime.

He has been telling friends that it compares with Stalinist Moscow or perhaps the new regime in the Kremlin.

It should certainly make interesting reading - particularly if the book comes out in print prior to the district council elections in May 1992.

Colin's big clean-up!



Councillor Colin McNicol

COLIN McNicol, the long-serving councillor for Mount Vernon, now occupies the proverbial bed of nails.

He has just had the misfortune to have been named the city's convener of parks and leisure.

The department is in a mess and has been for a number of years.

The former convener, Councillor Danny Crawford, found himself swimming in treacle over his plans to sell off a huge chunk of

By BACKBENCHER

Glasgow Green to leisure developers.

Meanwhile the director, Bernard "Rambo" Connolly, seems more interested in leisure contracts and forthcoming compulsory competitive tendering than parks maintenance.

And the deputy director has been sacked over his alleged connection